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RESTORATION COMEDY: THE REALITY & THE MYTH

I.

HENRY JAMES—whose 'social comedy' may be allowed to provide a standard of maturity—once remarked that he found Congreve 'insufferable,'[1] and perhaps the first thing to say of Restoration drama—tragedy as well as comedy—is that the bulk of it is insufferably dull. There are long stretches of boredom to be found in the lower ranges of Elizabethan drama, but there is nothing comparable to the unmitigated fatigue that awaits the reader of *Love in a Tub*, *Sir Martin Mar-all*, *Mr. Limberham*, *The Relapse*, or *The Mourning Bride*. And who returns to Dryden's heroic plays with renewed zest? The superiority of the common run of plays in the first period to that of the second is, at all events, a commonplace. It should be equally commonplace that the strength of the Elizabethan drama lies partly in the kind and scope—the quality and variety—of the interests that the playwrights were able to enlist, partly in the idiom that they had at their command: the drama drew on a vigorous non-dramatic literature, and literature in general was in close relation with non-literary interests and a rich common language. That is not the whole story, but it is an important part of it, and it seems profitable, in a discussion of Restoration comedy, to keep these facts in mind for comparison. Ever since Collier published *A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage* opponents of Restoration comedy have conducted their case almost entirely in moral terms, and it has been easy for recent critics, rightly discarding Lamb's obvious subterfuge, to turn the moral argument upside down, to find freedom of manners where Macaulay found licentiousness. 'Morals' are, in the long run, decidedly relevant—but only in the long run: literary criticism has prior claims. If, pedantically, we try to see the comedy of manners in relation to

[1] *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 140.

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its contemporary non-dramatic literature—to take its bearings in the general culture of the time—we may at least make possible a free and critical approach.

During the forty years that followed the Restoration, English literature, English culture, was ' upper-class ' to an extent which it had never been before, and was not, after Addison, to be again. ' Now if they ask me,' said Dryden, ' whence it is that our conversation is so much refined? I must freely and without flattery, ascribe it to the court,' and his insistence, as a writer, on ' the benefit of converse ' with his courtly patrons was not merely dedicatory fulsomeness ; the influence of the current conception of ' the gentleman ' is shown plainly enough by the urbane ease of his critical prefaces ;[2] and Dryden's non-dramatic prose is fairly representative of the new age.

It is this that explains why, if one comes to Restoration literature after some familiarity with the Elizabethans, the first impression made by the language is likely to be a sense of what has been lost ; the disintegration of the old cultural unity has plainly resulted in impoverishment. The speech of the educated is now remote from the speech of the people (Bunyan's huge sales were, until the eighteenth century, outside ' the circumference of wit '), and idiomatic vigour and evocative power seem to have gone out of the literary medium. But there was gain as well as loss. The common mode of Restoration prose— for there is now a common mode, a norm—was not evolved merely in the interests of good form and polite intercourse ; it had behind it a more serious pressure. When, in 1667, Sprat attacked ' this vicious abundance of phrase . . . this volubility of tongue, which makes so great a noise in the world,' he had in mind the needs of scientific enquiry and rational discussion. ' They have therefore,' he said of the Royal Society, ' been most rigorous in putting in execution the only remedy that can be found for this *extravagance*, and that has been a constant resolution to reject all amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style ; to return back to the primitive

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[2]On ' the last and greatest advantage of our writing, which proceeds from *conversation*,' see in particular the *Defence of the Epilogue*. And the dialogue form in which Dryden cast the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* was not unrecognizably far from actuality.

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purity and shortness, when men delivered so many *things* almost in an equal number of *words*. They have exacted from all their members a close, naked, natural way of speaking, positive expressions, clear senses, a native easiness, bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can.' For the first time the English language was made—and to some extent made consciously—an instrument for rational dissection.

> 'When once the aversion to bear uneasiness taketh place in a man's mind, it doth so check all the passions, that they are dampt into a kind of indifference; they grow faint and languishing, and come to be subordinate to that fundamental maxim, of not purchasing any thing at the price of a difficulty. This made that he had as little eagerness to oblige, as he had to hurt men; the motive of his giving bounties was rather to make men less uneasy to him, than more easy to themselves; and yet no ill-nature all this while. He would slide from an asking face, and could guess very well. It was throwing a man off from his shoulders, that leaned upon them with his whole weight; so that the party was not gladder to receive, than he was to give.'

This is from Halifax's *Character of Charles II*, and the even tone, the sinuous ease of movement and the clarity of the analysis mark the passage as unmistakably post-Restoration. Halifax, of course, is in some ways an unusually handsome representative of his age; he is racy (the apt adjective is supplied by his editor, H. C. Foxcroft) as well as polite. But the achievement represented by his style was far from being a merely individual achievement. Burnet, a far less lively writer, combines substance with clarity and (sometimes) wit,[3] and 'reason and common equity' govern

[3] 'He had a softness of temper that charmed all who came near him, till they found how little they could depend on good looks, kind words, and fair promises; in which he was liberal to excess, because he intended nothing by them, but to get rid of importunities, and to silence all farther pressing upon him. He seemed to have no sense of religion: both at prayers and sacrament he, as it were, took care to satisfy people that he was in no sort concerned in that about which he was employed. So that he was very far

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Locke's style as well as his thought. Halifax's shrewd and subtle portrait is unlike anything that had appeared in English before his time, and it could only have appeared when it did.

Now an upper-class culture that produced *Absalom and Achitophel*, *The Character of a Trimmer*, Burnet's *History*, Dryden's critical prefaces and Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, may have been limited, but it was not altogether decadent. If the drama is inferior it is not because it represents—by Elizabethan standards—a limited culture, but because it represents contemporary culture so inadequately ; it has no significant relation with the best thought of the time. Heroic tragedy is decadent because it is factitious ; it substitutes violent emotionalism for emotion, the purple patch for poetry, and its rhetoric, unlike Elizabethan dramatic rhetoric, has no connection with the congenial non-dramatic modes ; it is artificial in a completely damaging sense, *and by contemporary standards*. If we look for an early illustration of the bad mid-eighteenth-century conception of poetry as something applied from the outside[4] we find it in Dryden's verse plays, where he adopts canons of style which he would not have dreamed of applying—apart from his Odes—in his non-dramatic verse. Tragedy, he said, ' is naturally pompous and magnificent.' Nothing in English literature is more surprising—if we stop to consider—than the complete discrepancy between the sinewy ease of Dryden's satires and the stiff opaqueness of his dramatic verse ; and ' the lofty style,' since it cannot modulate, is always coming down with a bump.[5] It is only in the easy strength of occasional lines (' A good, luxurious, palatable faith ') that we hear his natural voice. In the plays as a whole—each made up of a succession of ' great ' moments and heroic postures—the ' nature ' that is ' wrought up to a higher pitch '[6] bears little

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from being an hypocrite, unless his assisting at those performances was a sort of hypocrisy (as no doubt it was) : but he was sure not to increase that by any the least appearance of religion.'—Burnet, *History of My Own Time*, ed. Osmond Airy, Vol. I, p. 166. *Characters of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. D. Nichol Smith, p. 218.

[4] ' . . . enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers.'—Gray's note to *The Progress of Poesy*, 1754.

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resemblance to the Nature that was to figure so largely in the Augustan code.

This, or a similar account, would probably be accepted by all critics of the Restoration heroic play. What is not commonly recognized (it is, at all events, not said) is that the comedy of manners exhibits a parallel attenuation and enfeeblement of what the age, taken as a whole, had to offer. I am not, for the moment, referring to the moral or social code expressed. The observation to start from is that the prose in which Restoration comedy is written—select which dramatist you like—is poor and inexpressive in comparison with the staple non-dramatic prose.

Congreve is usually accepted as the most brilliant stylist of the five or six comic dramatists who count. But place beside the extracts quoted from Halifax and Burnet a passage or two from *Love for Love* or *The Way of the World* (it makes no difference whether the speaker is Scandal or Mirabell), and Congreve's style shows as nerveless in the comparison:

> 'A mender of reputations! ay, just as he is a keeper of secrets, another virtue that he sets up for in the same manner. For the rogue will speak aloud in the posture of a whisper; and deny a woman's name, while he gives you the marks of her person: he will forswear receiving a letter from her, and at the same time show you her hand in the superscription; and

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[5] I'm pleased and pained, since first her eyes I saw,
As I were stung with some tarantula.
Arms, and the dusty field, I less admire,
And soften strangely in some new desire;
Honour burns in me not so fiercely bright,
But pales as fires when mastered by the light:
Even while I speak and look, I change yet more,
And now am nothing that I was before.
I'm numbed, and fixed, and scarce my eyeballs move;
I fear it is the lethargy of love!
—*The Conquest of Granada*, Part I, III, i.

[6] '. . . the nature of a serious play: this last is indeed the representation of nature, but 'tis nature wrought up to a higher pitch.'—*Of Dramatic Poesy*.

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yet perhaps he has counterfeited the hand too, and sworn to a truth; but he hopes not to be believed; and refuses the reputation of a lady's favour, as a doctor says *No* to a bishopric, only that it may be granted him. In short, he is a public professor of secrecy, and makes proclamation that he holds private intelligence.'

A. 'To give t' other his due, he has something of good nature, and does not always want wit.'

B. 'Not always: but as often as his memory fails him, and his common-place of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some few scraps of other folks' wit. He is one whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to be endured. He has indeed one good quality, he is not exceptious; for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire.'

This reminds me of Arnold's definition of Macaulayese, 'the external characteristic being a hard metallic movement with nothing of the soft play of life, and the internal characteristic being a perpetual semblance of hitting the right nail on the head without the reality.' Both construction and movement are so far from being expressive *of* anything in particular that the main function of some words is, it seems, to complete an antithesis or to display a riddling wit.[7] The verbal pattern appears at times to be completely unrelated to a mode of perceiving. The passages quoted have an air of preening themselves on their acute discriminations, but the antitheses are mechanical, and the pattern is monotonously repeated: 'She has beauty enough to make any man think she has wit; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who should tell her so'—the common form soon loses the sting of

[7] *The Old Bachelor* shows the riddles in the process of manufacture. *Bellmour*: He is the drum to his own praise—the only implement of a soldier he resembles; like that, being full of blustering noise and emptiness. *Sharper*: And like that, of no use but to be beaten, etc.

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surprise. Burnet can write in an antithetical style which also penetrates:

> 'And tho' he desired to become absolute, and to overturn both our religion and our laws, yet he would neither run the risk, nor give himself the trouble, which so great a design required. He had an appearance of gentleness in his outward deportment: but he seemed to have no bowels nor tenderness in his nature: and in the end of his life he became cruel.'

The nearest approach to subtlety that Congreve's style allows is represented by such things as this:

> *Fainall.* You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and though you may have cruelty enough not to satisfy a lady's longing, you have too much generosity not to be tender of her honour. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected, and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.
>
> *Mirabell.* You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confess you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you than is your wife.

It isn't, really, very subtle. As for the 'wit,' when it isn't merely verbal and obvious ('Fruitful, the head fruitful;—that bodes horns; the fruit of the head is horns,' etc.) it is hopelessly dependent on convention.

> 'She that marries a fool, Sir Sampson, forfeits the reputation of her honesty or understanding: and she that marries a very witty man is a slave to the severity and insolent conduct of her husband. I should like a man of wit for a lover, because I would have such a man in my power; but I would no more be his wife than his enemy. For his malice is not a more terrible consequence of his aversion than his jealousy is of his love.'

An intelligent husband, you see, must be jealous; take away that entertaining assumption and the point is blunted. Halifax is a witty writer, but his wit springs naturally from the situation he is concerned with and illuminates it. 'A partner in government is so unnatural a thing that it is a squint-eyed allegiance which

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must be paid to such a double-bottomed monarchy.'[8] Congreve's wit is entirely self-regarding.

If there were space to discuss the manner of Wycherley, Etherege and Vanbrugh, it is a similar account that would have to be given. I am not suggesting that they write in a completely indistinguishable common mode (though they all have passages which might come from any play); but in essentials—in the way in which they use their similes and antitheses, in the conception of 'style' and 'wit' that they exhibit—they all stand together. Not one of them has achieved a genuinely sensitive and individual mode of expression; and in each the pattern of the prose inhibits any but the narrowest—and the most devastatingly *expected*—response. That, I should claim, is the judgment to which an analysis of their prose inevitably leads. The trouble is not that the Restoration comic writers deal with a limited number of themes, but that they bring to bear a miserably limited set of attitudes. And these, in turn, are factitious to exactly the same degree as the prose is artificial and non-representative of the current non-dramatic medium.

II.

Apart from the presentation of incidental and unrelated 'wit' (which soon becomes as tiring as the epigrams of the 'good talker'), Restoration comedy has two main interests—the behaviour of the polite and of pretenders to politeness, and some aspects of sexual relationships. Critics have made out a case for finding in one or other of these themes a unifying principle and a serious base for the comedy of manners. According to Miss Lynch, the 'thoroughly conventionalized social mode' of the courtly circle 'was discovered to have manifestly comic aspects, both when awkwardly misinterpreted, and when completely fulfilled through personalities to which, however, it could not give complete expression,'[9] and both these discrepancies were exploited by

[8] *cf.* (also from *The Character of a Trimmer*) '. . . the indecent courtship of some silken divines, who, one would think, did practise to bow at the altar, only to learn to make the better legs at Court.'

[9] K. M. Lynch, *The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy*, p. 216.

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Etherege and his successors. Bonamy Dobrée, attributing to the comic dramatists ' a deep curiosity, and a desire to try new ways of living,' finds that ' the distinguishing characteristic of Restoration comedy down to Congreve is that it is concerned with the attempt to rationalize sexual relationships. It is this that makes it different from any other comedy that has ever been written . . . It said in effect, " Here is life lived upon certain assumptions ; see what it becomes." It also dealt, as no other comedy has ever done, with a subject that arose directly out of this, namely sex-antagonism, a consequence of the experimental freedom allowed to women, which gave matter for some of its most brilliant scenes.'[10]

These accounts, as developed, certainly look impressive, and if Restoration comedy really answered to them—if it had something fresh and penetrating to say on sex and social relations—there would be no need to complain, even if one found the ' solutions ' distasteful. But Miss Lynch's case, at all events, depends on a vigorous reading into the plays of values which are not there, values which could not possibly be expressed, in fact, in the prose of any of the dramatists. (The candid reader can turn up the passages selected by Miss Lynch in support of her argument, and see if they are not all in the factitious, superficial mode that I have described).

We may consider, by way of illustration, Etherege's *The Man of Mode*. When the play opens, Dorimant (' the finest of all fine gentlemen in Restoration comedy ') is trying to rid himself of an old mistress, Mrs. Loveit, before taking up with a new, Bellinda, whilst Young Bellair, in love with Emilia, is trying to find some way out of marrying Harriet, an heiress whom his father has brought to town for him. The entertainment is made up of these two sets of complications, together with an exhibition of the would-be modishness of Sir Fopling Flutter. Events move fast. After a night spent in various sociabilities Dorimant keeps an appointment with Bellinda at 5 a.m. Letting her out of his lodgings an hour or so later, and swearing to be discreet ' By all the Joys I have had, and those you keep in store,' he is surprised by his companions, and in the resulting confusion Bellinda finds herself

[10]Bonamy Dobrée, *Restoration Comedy*, pp. 22-23.

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paying an unwilling visit to Mrs. Loveit. Dorimant appears and is rated by the women before he ' flings off.' Meanwhile Young Bellair and Emilia have secretly married. Dorimant, his equanimity recovered, turns up for the exposure, followed by his mistresses. The lovers are forgiven, the mistresses are huddled off the stage, and it is decided that Dorimant, who, the previous day, had ingratiated himself with Harriet's mother, and whose ' soul has quite given up her liberty,' shall be allowed to pay court to the heiress.

It seems to me that what the play provides—apart from the briskly handled intrigue—is a demonstration of the physical stamina of Dorimant. But Miss Lynch sees further. For her, Dorimant is ' the fine flowering of Restoration culture.' Illustrating her theory of the double standard, she remarks: ' We laugh at Sir Fopling Flutter because he so clumsily parodies social fashions which Dorimant interprets with unfailing grace and distinction. We laugh at Dorimant because his assumed affectation admits of so poor and incomplete an expression of an attractive and vigorous personality.'[11] The ' unfailing grace and distinction ' are perhaps not much in evidence in Dorimant's spiteful treatment of Mrs. Loveit ;[12] but even if we ignore those brutish scenes we are forced to ask, How do we know that there *is* this ' attractive and vigorous personality ' beneath the conventional forms? Dorimant's intrigues are of no more human significance than those of a barn-yard cock, and as for what Miss Lynch calls ' his really serious affair with Harriet ' (I feel this deserves a *sic*), it is purely theatrical, and the ' pangs of love ' are expressed in nothing but the con-

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[11] *The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy*, p. 181.

[12] See II, ii and V, i, where Dorimant, trying to force a quarrel with Mrs. Loveit, attributes to her a fondness for Sir Fopling. The first of these scenes was too much for Etherege, and he makes Bellinda say,

> He's given me the proof which I desired of his love,
> But 'tis a proof of his ill nature too.
> I wish I had not seen him use her so.

But this is soon forgotten, and we are not, of course, called on to register an unfavourable judgment of Dorimant.

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ventional formulæ: 'She's gone, but she has left a pleasing Image of herself behind that wanders in my Soul.' The answer to the question posed is that Miss Lynch's account is a mere assumption. Nothing that Dorimant actually *says* will warrant it—and nothing in the whole of Restoration comedy—in the words actually spoken—allows us a glimpse of those other 'personalities' to which the conventional social modes 'could not give complete expression.' The 'real values'[13] simply are not there.

A minor point can be made in passing. It is just possible to claim that Restoration comedy contains 'social criticism' in its handling of 'the vulgar.' 'Come Mr. Sharper,' says Congreve's Belinda, 'you and I will take a turn, and laugh at the vulgar; both the great vulgar and the small,' and Etherege's Lady Townley expresses the common attitude of the polite towards the social nuisances: 'We should love wit, but for variety be able to divert ourselves with the extravagancies of those who want it.' The butts, unfortunately, are only shown as fools by the discrepancy between their ambitions and their achievements, not because their ambitions are puerile. The subject is hardly worth discussing, since it is obviously nothing but an easily satisfied sense of superiority that is diverted by the 'variety' of a constant succession of Dapperwits, Froths and Fopling Flutters. 'When a humour takes in London,' Tom Brown remarked, 'they ride it to death ere they leave it. The primitive Christians were not persecuted with half that variety as the poor unthinking beaus are tormented with upon the theatre . . . A huge great muff, and a gaudy ribbon hanging at a bully's backside, is an excellent jest, and new-invented curses, as, Stap my vitals, damn my diaphragm, slit my wind pipe, sink me ten thousand fathom deep, rig up a new beau, though in the main 'tis but the same everlasting coxcomb.'[14]

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[13] 'The love affairs of Courtal and Ariana, Freeman and Gatty [in *She Wou'd if She Cou'd*] are similarly embarrassed by social convention . . . The conduct of these polite lovers acquires comic vitality through the continually suggested opposition of artificial and real values.'—*op. cit.*, p. 152.

[14] Tom Brown, *Works*, Vol. III, *Amusements Comical and Serious*, 'At the Playhouse,' p. 39.

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III.

In the matter of sexual relations Restoration comedy is entirely dominated by a narrow set of conventions. The objection that it is only certain characters, not the dramatists themselves, who accept them can be more freely encountered when the assumptions that, at all events, are expressed most frequently have been briefly illustrated.

The first convention is, of course, that constancy in love, especially in marriage, is a bore. Vanbrugh, who was the most uneasy if not the most honest of the comic dramatists (I think that in *The Provok'd Wife* he shows as unusually honest), unambiguously attributes this attitude to Sir John Brute:

> 'What cloying meat is love—when matrimony's the sauce to it! Two years marriage has debauch'd my five senses . . . No boy was ever so weary of his tutor, no girl of her bib, no nun of doing penance, or old maid of being chaste, as I am of being married. Sure there's a secret curse entail'd upon the very name of wife!'
>
> 'The woman's well enough ; she has no vice that I know of, but she's a wife, and—damn a wife!'[15]

What Vanbrugh saw as a fit sentiment for Sir John had by that time (1697) served the Restoration stage—without change—for thirty years. In *She Wou'd if She Cou'd* Etherege had exhibited Sir Oliver Cockwood in an identical vein: 'A pox of this tying man and woman together, for better, for worse.' 'To have a mistress love thee entirely' is 'a damn'd trouble.' 'There are sots that would think themselves happy in such a Lady ; but to a true bred Gentleman all lawful solace is abomination.'[16] If Sir Oliver is a fool it is only because he is a trifle gross in his expression. 'If you did but know, Madam,' says the polite Freeman, 'what an odious thing it is to be thought to love a Wife in good Company.'[17] And the convention is constantly turning up in Congreve. 'There is no creature perfectly civil but a husband,' explains Mrs. Frail, 'for in a little time he grows only rude to

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[15] *The Provok'd Wife*, I, i ; II, i.
[16] *She Wou'd if She Cou'd*, I, i ; III, iii.
[17] *Ibid.*, III, iii.

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his wife, and that is the highest good breeding, for it begets his civility to other people.'[18] 'Marry her! Marry her!' Fainall advises Mirabell, 'Be half as well acquainted with her charms, as you are with her defects, and my life on't, you are your own man again.'[19] And Witwoud: 'A wit should no more be sincere than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.'[20] Appetite, it seems (and this is the second assumption) needs perpetually fresh stimulus. This is the faith of Rhodophil in *Marriage à la Mode* and of Constant in *The Provok'd Wife*, as well as of Wycherley's old procuress, Mrs. Joyner. 'If our wives would suffer us but now and then to make excursions,' Rhodophil explains to Palamede, 'the benefit of our variety would be theirs; instead of one continued, lazy, tired love, they would, in their turns, have twenty vigorous, fresh, and active lovers.'[21] 'Would anything but a madman complain of uncertainty?' asks Congreve's Angelica, for 'security is an insipid thing, and the overtaking and possessing of a wish, discovers the folly of the chase.'[22] And Fainall, in *The Way of the World*, speaks for a large class when he hints at a liking for sauce—a little gentleman's relish—to his seductions: 'I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.'[23] Fainall, of course, is what he is, but the attitude that makes sexual pleasure 'the bliss,' that makes woman 'delicious'—something to be savoured—as well as 'damned' and 'destructive,' demands, for its support, 'the

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[18]*Love for Love*, I, ii.
[19]*The Way of the World*, I, ii.
[20]*Ibid.*
[21]*Marriage à la Mode*, II, i. *cf. The Provok'd Wife*, III, i: Constant, 'There's a poor sordid slavery in marriage, that turns the flowing tide of honour, and sinks us to the lowest ebb of infamy. 'Tis a corrupted soil: Ill-nature, sloth, cowardice, and dirt, are all its product.' *Love in a Wood*, III, iii: Mrs. Joyner, 'For your own sake you should give her a new gown, for variety of dresses rouses desire, and makes an old mistress seem every day a new one.'
[22]*Love for Love*, IV, iii.
[23]*The Way of the World*, I, i.

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pleasure of a chase.'[24]

> Would you long preserve your lover?
> Would you still his goddess reign?
> Never let him all discover,
> Never let him much obtain.[25]

Restoration comedy used to be considered outrageously outspoken, but such stuff as this, far from being 'outspoken,' hovers on the outskirts of sexual relations, and sees nothing but the titillation of appetite ('Tis not the success,' Collier observed, 'but the manner of gaining it which is all in all[26]'). Sex is a hook baited with tempting morsels ;[27] it is a thirst quencher ;[28] it is a cordial ;[29] it is a dish to feed on ;[30] it is a bunch of grapes ;[31] it is anything

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[24]*The Old Bachelor*, I, i ; III, ii ('O thou delicious, damned, dear, destructive woman!') ; IV, ii.

[25]*Ibid.*, II, ii.

[26]*A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage*, 5th edition, 1738, p. 116.

[27]'Tis true you are so eager in pursuit of the temptation, that you save the devil the trouble of leading you into it: nor is it out of discretion that you don't swallow the very hook yourselves have baited, but . . . what you meant for a whet turns the edge of your puny stomachs.'—*The Old Bachelor*, I, i. 'Strike Heartwell home, before the bait's worn off the hook. Age will come. He nibbled fairly yesterday, and no doubt will be eager enough to-day to swallow the temptation.'—*Ibid.*, III, i.

[28]'What was my pleasure is become my duty: and I have as little stomach to her now as if I were her husband . . . Pox on't! that a man can't drink without quenching his thirst.'—*The Double-Dealer*, III, i.

[29]'You must get you a mistress, Rhodophil. That indeed, is living upon cordials ; but as fast as one fails, you must supply it with another.'—*Marriage à la Mode*, I, i.

[30]'Because our husbands cannot feed on one dish, therefore we must be starved.'—*Ibid.*, III, i.

[31]The only way to keep us new to one another, is never to enjoy, as they keep grapes, by hanging them upon a line ; they must touch nothing, if you would preserve them fresh.'—*Ibid.*, V, i.

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but sex. (This, of course, explains why some people can combine a delighted approval of Restoration comedy with an unbalanced repugnance for such modern literature as deals sincerely and realistically with sexual relationships).

Now the objection referred to above was that sentiments such as these are not offered for straightforward acceptance. Many of them are attributed to characters plainly marked as Wicked (Maskwell, for example, is the black-a-vised villain of melodrama), or, more frequently, as trivial, and the dramatist can therefore dissociate himself. He may even be engaged in showing his audience the explicit, logical consequences of the half unconscious premises on which they base their own lives, saying, as Mr. Dobrée has it, ' Here is life lived upon certain assumptions ; see what it becomes.' To this there are several answers. The first is that reflections of the kind that I have quoted are indistinguishable in tone and style from the general epigrammatic stock-in-trade (the audience was not altogether to be blamed if, as Congreve complained, they could not at first ' distinguish betwixt the character of a Witwoud and a Lovewit ') ; and they are largely ' exhibited,' just as all the self-conscious witticisms are exhibited, for the sake of their immediate ' comic ' effect. One has only to note the laughter of a contemporary audience at a revival, and the places where the splutters occur, to realize how much of the fun provides a rather gross example of tendency wit.[32] The same attitudes, moreover, are manipulated again and again, turning up with the

[32]The Freudian ' censor ' is at times projected in the form of the stage puritan. The plays written soon after the Commonwealth period appealed to Royalist prejudice by satirizing the ' seemingly precise ' ; and even later, when ' the bonfires of devotion,' ' the bellows of zeal,' were forgotten, a good deal of the self-conscious swagger of indecency seems to have been directed against ' our protestant husbands,' city merchants, aldermen and the like ; the ' daring ' effect was intensified by postulating a shockable audience somewhere—not necessarily in the theatre. Not that the really obscene jokes were merely bravado: Collier quite rightly remarked that ' the modern poets seem to use smut as the old ones did Machines, to relieve a fainting situation.'—*A Short View*, 5th edition, p. 4.

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stale monotony of jokes on post-cards, and the play that is made with them demands only the easiest, the most superficial, response. But it is, after all, useless to argue about the degree of detachment, the angle at which these attitudes and assumptions are presented. As soon as one selects a particular comedy for that exercise one realizes that all is equally grist to the mill and that the dramatist (there is no need, here, to make distinctions) has no coherent attitude of his own. A consistent artistic purpose would not be content to express itself in a style that allows so limited, so local an effect.

But it is the triviality that one comes back to. In Dryden's *Marriage à la Mode* the characters accept the usual conventions: constancy is dull, and love only thrives on variety.

Palamede O, now I have found it! you dislike her for no other reason but because she's your wife.

Rhodophil And is not that enough? All that I know of her perfections now, is only by memory . . . At last we arrived at that point, that there was nothing left in us to make us new to one another . . .

Palamede The truth is, your disease is very desperate ; but, though you cannot be cured, you may be patched up a little: you must get you a mistress, Rhodophil. That, indeed, is living upon cordials ; but, as fast as one fails, you must supply it with another.

The mistress that Rhodophil selects is Melantha, whom Palamede is to marry ; Palamede falls in love with Doralice, Rhodophil's wife, and the ensuing complications provide sufficient entertainment (the grotto scene, III, ii, is really funny). Mr. Dobrée, however, regards the play as a witty exposure of the impossibility of rationalizing sex relation, as Palamede and Rhodophil attempt to rationalize them. Dryden ' laughs morality back into its rightful place, as the scheme which ultimately makes life most comfortable.'[33] But what Dryden actually does is to *use* the conventions for the amusement they afford, not to examine them. The level at which the play works is fairly indicated by the opening song:

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Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now,
When passion is decayed?
We loved, and we loved, as long as we could,
'Till our love was loved out in us both ;
But our marriage is dead, when the pleasure is fled:
'Twas pleasure first made it an oath.

If I have pleasures for a friend,
And further love in store,
What wrong has he, whose joys did end,
And who could give no more?
'Tis a madness that he should be jealous of me,
Or that I should bar him of another:
For all we can gain, is to give ourselves pain,
When neither can hinder the other.

The lovers make no attempt to ' rationalize sex ' for the simple reason that genuine sexual feelings no more enter into the play as a whole than feelings of any kind enter into the song. (The obviously faked emotions of the heroic plot are, after all, relevant—and betraying). And according to Mr. Dobrée, ' In one sense the whole idea of Restoration comedy is summed up in the opening song of *Marriage à la Mode*.[34]

In a sense, too, Mr. Dobrée is right. Restoration comedy nowhere provides us with much more of the essential stuff of human experience than we have there. Even Congreve, by common account the best of the comic writers, is no exception. I have said that his verbal pattern often seems to be quite unrelated to an individual mode of perceiving. At best it registers a very limited mode. Restoration prose is all ' social ' in its tone, implications and general tenor, but Congreve's observation is *merely* of the public surface.[35] And Congreve, too, relies on the

[33] *Restoration Comedy*, p. 113.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[35] ' Nay, 'tis true,' Mirabell tells Millamant, ' you are no longer handsome when you have lost your lover ; your beauty dies upon the instant ; for beauty is the lover's gift ; 'tis he bestows your

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conventional assumptions. In *The Way of the World*, it is true, they are mainly given to the bad and the foolish to express: it is Fainall who discourses on the pleasures of disliking one's wife, and Witwoud who maintains that only old age and ugliness ensure constancy. And Mirabell, who is explictly opposed to some aspects of contemporary manners, goes through the common forms in a tone of rather weary aloofness: 'I wonder, Fainall, that you who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.' But Congreve himself is not above raising a cheap snigger,[36] and, above all, the characters with some life in them have nothing to fall back on—nothing, that is, except the conventional, and conventionally limited, pleasures of sex. Millamant, who says she loathes the country and hates the town, expects to draw vitality from the excitement of incessant solicitation:

> 'I'll be solicited to the very last, nay, and afterwards . . . I should think I was poor and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduced to an inglorious ease, and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation . . . Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent of the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature, as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air.'

Everyone seems to have found Millamant intelligent and attractive, but her attitude is not far removed from that expressed in

> Would you long preserve your lover?
> Would you still his goddess reign?

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charms—your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it: for that reflects our praises, rather than your face.' The significant shift from 'the lover's gift' to anyone's 'commendations' seems to be completely unconscious.

[36] Ay there's my grief; that's the sad change of life,
To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.
—*The Way of the World*, II, ii.

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and she shares with characters who are decidedly not attractive a disproportionate belief in ' the pleasure of a chase.' Which is not surprising in view of her other occupations and resources ; visiting, writing and receiving letters, tea-parties and small talk make up a round that is never for a moment enlivened by the play of genuine intelligence.[37] And although Congreve recognizes, at times, the triviality of his characters,[38] it is to the world whose confines were the Court, the drawing-room, the play-house and the park—a world completely lacking the real sophistication and self-knowledge that might, in some measure, have redeemed it—that he limits his appeal.

It is, indeed, hard to resist the conclusion that ' society '—the smart town society that sought entertainment at the theatres[39]—was fundamentally bored. In *The Man of Mode* Emilia remarks of Medley, ' I love to hear him talk o' the intrigues, let 'em be never so dull in themselves, he'll make 'em pleasant i' the relation,' and the idiotic conversation that follows (II, i), affording us a glimpse of what Miss Lynch calls ' the most brilliant society which Restoration comedy has to offer,'[40] suggests in more than one way how badly society *needed* to be entertained. It is the boredom—the constant need for titillation—that helps to explain not only the heroic ' heightening ' of emotion, but the various scenic effects, the devices of staging and costume that became popular

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[37]As Lady Brute remarks, ' After all, a woman's life would be a dull business, if it were not for the men . . . We shou'd never blame Fate for the shortness of our days ; our time would hang wretchedly upon our hands.'—*The Provok'd Wife*, III, iii.

[38]Mirabell: ' You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools ; things who visit you from their excessive idleness ; bestowing on your easiness that time which is the encumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society?'—*The Way of the World*, II, i.

[39]The constitution, habits and demands of the audience are admirably illustrated by Alexandre Beljame in that neglected classic of scholarship, *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre au dix-huitième siècle*, 1660-1740. See also C. V. Deane, *Dramatic Theory and the Rhymed Heroic Play*, Chapter I, Section 6.

[40]*The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy*, p. 177.

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at this period. (Charles II ' almost died of laughing ' at Nell Gwynn's enormous hat). The conventions—of sexual pursuit, and so on—were an attempt to make life interesting—an impossible job for those who were aware of so limited a range of human potentialities.

The dominating mood of Restoration comedy is, by common account, a cynical one. But one cannot even say that there is here, in contrast to naïve Romantic fervours, the tough strength of disillusion. If—recognizing that there is a place in the educational process for, say, La Rochfoucauld—one finds the ' cynicism ' of the plays distasteful, it is because it is easy and superficial ; the attitudes that we are presented with are based on so meagre an amount of observation and experience. Thus, ' Elle retrouvait dans l'adultère toutes les platitudes du mariage ' has, superficially, much the same ' meaning ' as, ' I find now, by sad experience, that a mistress is much more chargeable than a wife, and after a little time too, grows full as dull and insignificant.' But whereas the first sentence has behind it the whole of *Madame Bovary*, the second comes from *Sir Martin Mar-all*, which (although Dryden shares the honours with the Duke of Newcastle) is perhaps the stupidest play I have ever read, and the context is imbecility.[41]

But the superficiality is betrayed at every turn—by the obvious rhythms of the interspersed songs, as well as by the artificial elegance of the prose. And the cynicism is closely allied with—merges into—sentimentality. One thinks of the sentimentally conceived Fidelia in the resolutely ' tough ' *Plain Dealer* ; and there is no doubt that the audience was meant to respond sympathetically when, at the end of *Love for Love*, Angelica declared her love for Valentine: ' Had I the world to give you, it could not make me worthy of so generous a passion ; here's my hand, my heart was

[41]Similarly, at the end of *Marriage à la Mode*, Doralice explains to Palamede: ' For aught I know, 'tis better that we have not [enjoyed one another] ; we might upon trial have liked each other less, as many a man and woman, that have loved as desperately as we, and yet, when they came to possession, have sighed and cried to themselves, Is this all?' Actually the lovers have not ' loved desperately ' at all, and the generalization has no adequate particular context to give it weight.

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always yours, and struggled very hard to make this utmost trial of your virtue.' There is, of course, a good deal of loose emotion in the heroic plays, written—it is useful to remember—for the same audience, and Dryden, we know, was not alone in admiring the Fletcherian ' pathos.'[42] But it is the lyric verse of the period that provides the strongest confirmatory evidence of the kind of bad taste that is in question. It is not merely that in Etherege, Sedley and Dorset the feeling comes from much nearer the surface than in the Metaphysicals and the Caroline poets, intellectual ' wit ' no longer strengthens and controls the feeling. Conventional attitudes are rigged out in a conventional vocabulary and conventional images. (The stock outfit—the ' fair eyes ' that ' wound,' the ' pleasing pains,' the ' sighs and tears,' the ' bleeding hearts ' and ' flaming darts '—can be studied in any anthology, which will probably show also how lovers ' sigh, languish, and die ' when left by their mistresses[43]). There is, in consequence, a pervasive

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[42] I'm numbed, and fixed, and scarce my eyeballs move ;
I fear it is the lethargy of love!
'Tis he ; I feel him now in every part:
Like a new lord he vaunts about my heart ;
Surveys, in state, each corner of my breast,
While poor fierce I, that was, am dispossessed.
—*The Conquest of Granada*, Part I, III, i.

A secret pleasure trickles through my veins:
It works about the inlets of my soul,
To feel thy touch, and pity tempts the pass:
But the tough metal of my heart resists ;
'Tis warmed with the soft fire, not melted down.
—*Don Sebastian*, III, i.

' Feeling,' in Dryden's serious plays, is fairly represented by such passages as these.

[43] See, for example, Aphra Behn's ' Love in fantastic triumph sate,' Buckingham's *To his Mistress* (' Phyllis, though your all powerful charms '), Dryden's ' Ask not the cause why sullen spring,' and ' Ah, how sweet it is to love,' and Sedley's *To Chloris*—all in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, or Ault's *Seventeenth Century Lyrics*.

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strain of sentimental vulgarity.

Farewell, ungrateful traitor!
  Farewell, my perjured swain!
Let never injured creature
  Believe a man again.
The pleasure of possessing
Surpasses all expressing,
But 'tis too short a blessing,
  And love too long a pain.
. . . . . .
The passion you pretended,
  Was only to obtain ;
But when the charm is ended,
  The charmer you disdain.
Your love by ours we measure
Till we have lost our treasure,
But dying is a pleasure
  When living is a pain.

This piece of music-hall sentiment comes from Dryden's *The Spanish Friar*, and it does not stand alone. The mode that was to produce, among other things of equal merit, 'When lovely woman stoops to folly,' had its origin in the lyrics of the Restoration period. Most of these were written by the group connected with the theatres, and they serve to underline the essential criticism of the plays. The criticism that defenders of Restoration comedy need to answer is not that the comedies are 'immoral,' but that they are trivial, gross and dull.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

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THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF INTELLIGENCE TESTING

AS intelligence tests have demonstrated more and more conclusively their usefulness in our civilization so it has become in some ways less, and in others much more urgent to inquire what it is they measure. For ' practical ' workers—those who minister to the more obvious needs of society—the fact that intelligence tests can be put to a number of simple uses is sufficient ; they ' work,' so why bother with ' purely theoretical inquiries ' as to why they work? Indeed, at the present time, such inquiries are likely to interest only those who question the pre-eminence of the simple practical needs of our civilization. For them the question is not simply ' Are these tests useful in our society?' but ' What are these tests, and what sort of society is it that finds them useful?'

To begin with, we may take for granted the excellence of the tests by the testers' standards. When a child is said to be better or worse than the average at these tests we may be fairly certain that the tester really does know what the average is, that a repetition of the test or a trial at similar intelligence tests will give practically the same result, and (with a little less certainty) that the result has not been greatly affected by the child's nervousness, lack of interest, ill-health or other modifiable condition. That we can say so much is due to the tremendous amount of industry, patience, skill and insight spent on intelligence tests during the last forty years. For the sake of discussion we may leave out of account the effects of imperfect tests and incompetent testers, both of which are to be found in considerable numbers but both of which are also condemned by the standards of the testing movement itself and are gradually being eliminated.

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Anticipating a number of improvements which will undoubtedly be made as time goes on, one can be certain that intelligence scales are highly efficient instruments for measuring something. And what is it they measure? It was perhaps unfortunate, as Spearman early suggested, that the term ' intelligence ' ever came into the question. There never was or could be any precise criterion of intelligence with which the test assessments could be compared for the purpose of validating them. Teachers' judgments correlated positively but only to a slight extent with the scores ; their opinion was naturally derived from achievement rather than capacity and was inevitably affected by the interaction between their temperament and habits of mind and those of the child. For these and other reasons a low positive correlation is what one should expect between their judgment of capacity and an objective measure of it. Along these lines, therefore, there could be no very full validation, but only the assurance that what the tests measure does play some part, though not always a large part, in what English and American school teachers of the present day regard as intelligence.

If we may put this aside as not entirely adequate, there are two approaches left. One is to examine directly the situation and materials and tasks involved in testing ; this has been, not ignored, but not very fully explored by psychologists. The other is the indirect approach in which attention is given exclusively to information deduced from the numerical results of the tests and their relation to other numerical data.

To consider the indirect approach first one may refer to Terman's statement of the case in *The Measurement of Intelligence*. He argued the validity of the tests from the ' normal distribution ' of the scores, the constancy of this distribution at various age levels, and the comparative constancy of the intelligence quotient when children are re-tested at different ages. This means that the capacity measured by the tests is one of which the degree possessed by each individual, relative to the degree possessed by others of the same age, will remain roughly constant throughout childhood and adolescence, unaffected by the vicissitudes of education and experience (unless these are very severe). It means further that this capacity is one that varies continuously from one person to another, rather like such traits as height, weight, or physical

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strength, and not like, say, eye colour, which divides people into almost discontinuous groups.

A feature of this capacity that has given rise to much comment and some dismay is that it stops growing somewhere between the ages of fourteen and eighteen (different tests give different conclusions as to the year). It is significant of the whole popular attitude to intelligence tests that this fact is so often interpreted in a despondent and 'fatalistic' manner—'What! No chance for my boy if he isn't intelligent by the time he's sixteen?' In view of the enormous advances in intellectual life that do take place after that age (a fact that the testers are the first to emphasize) a more reasonable conclusion is that what stops growing then is not the factor in intellectual life upon which we place most value; although, of course, some minimum amount of it may be essential for any significant development. In this respect the capacity measured by the tests is rather like height. And popular concern at its cessation of growth corresponds to the dismay there would be if people had, through a misunderstanding of technical conceptions, identified 'height' with athletic prowess, and then learned that no advance in it could be expected after adolescence.

The more elaborate mathematical argument of Spearman, which seems still to stand now that the waves of statistical controversy are receding, demonstrates further that what the tests measure is very largely a general capacity which enters into them all, and not a mere summation of a heterogeneous assortment of different capacities. This position is being modified a good deal by the discovery of 'group factors.' But the net result seems to be that we can rely on measuring, by these tests, a capacity which is almost certainly required in some degree in all kinds of thinking. (For a clear and more adequate statement of what the mathematical arguments mean, W. P. Alexander's *Intelligence, Concrete and Abstract* is useful).

However, there can be no doubt that for practical purposes the most important fact about the capacity measured is that it proves to be useful, that teachers, industrialists and child psychologists find it important in the everyday affairs that concern them. The most convincing evidence to this effect is found when the tests are used to weed out people of very low intelligence, rather than to grade the higher ranges of intelligence in order of merit.

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Indeed, the use the tests were first designed for, the detection of children from whom only the minimum of educational achievement could be expected even under special conditions, is still the use that yields the most conclusive evidence of their workability. There is no room for doubt that in proper hands intelligence tests are a reliable instrument for diagnosing severe mental defect.

In the higher ranges of education and in vocational guidance and selection the evidence is conclusive by reason of its bulk rather than its precision. A glance at elementary text-books and introductions to the subject of intelligence testing (for instance, the chapter in Woodworth's *Psychology*, or Knight's *Intelligence and Intelligence Tests*) shows that there is curiously little direct experimental evidence (though there is, of course, some) of the value of the tests in education and occupational life. Their acceptance has come about less through scientific evidence than through the gradually increasing conviction of people who have to run practical affairs that selection by means of test does give at least slightly better results than guesswork at an interview or the hazards of an ordinary scholastic examination. So far as vocational guidance and selection, for instance, are shown to be valuable, some part of the credit must go to intelligence tests. A typical, though perhaps extreme, statement of these effective grounds for believing in the tests occurs in Carreon's enthusiastic *Philippine Studies in Mental Measurement*. Carreon quotes certain doubts expressed by a teacher about the value of intelligence tests in education, and instead of allaying them by argument turns simply to the testimony of army officers on the usefulness of the United States Army tests of intelligence in 1917-1918:

> 'The results of the psychological examinations are fully borne out by actual observation of the abilities and the capacity of various officers in the performance of duties assigned to them. I do not mean by this that they are an absolute gauge, but I do mean that they are an absolute guide and that given the practical tests we are enabled to arrive at the best possible determination of ability to meet the requirements of the service.'

This verbiage evidently means that the American Army thought the tests not too bad. 'Numerous other testimonies,' Carreon continues, 'may be added from men and women engaged in school

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work, industrial concerns, and social service institutions.' The argument is of the type ' A million Frenchmen can't be wrong.' Nevertheless there is something in it. And although such studies as Alexander's (*op. cit.*) suggest that the general capacity measured by all tests (Spearman's ' g,' on statistical analysis) does not contribute very largely to success at various school subjects, yet on the whole it seems clear that intelligence tests do rank successfully among selection tests for the educational and occupational requirements of our particular civilization.

This seems to be all that the indirect approach can tell us about the capacity that the testers measure and call intelligence. To see how this capacity is related to the everyday idea of intelligence one must attempt a direct examination of the nature of intelligence testing. What the majority of the tests aim at measuring is quite clearly understood. Knight (*op. cit.*) puts it accurately enough when he calls it ' relational thinking '—the capacity to observe the relation that one idea or perceived fact bears to another, and, given an idea and a relationship, to produce another idea bearing that relationship to the first. These are the fundamental processes of cognition that Spearman has called the eduction of relations and correlates.

It is evident, however, that these processes must have some medium in which to occur ; and the tester has the responsibility of selecting that medium. For this reason the bare statement of the processes involved in carrying out the test tasks needs to be supplemented by an examination of the materials in which the problems are framed and of the nature of the testing situation.

First it must be observed that the material of the tests is strictly trivial ; the test problems are shorn of the emotional significance which the problems of ' real life ' commonly have. Further, the test situation is always friendly, with the subject as the centre of benign attention from which all rivalry and all criticism are excluded. These characteristics of the tests and the testing situation go far towards removing, as they are meant to, all opportunity for the inhibition of intelligent thinking through emotional disturbances: the tendency to fly off at a tangent and evade the issue in thinking, confusion due to elements of crisis in the situation, resentment at criticism, reluctance to co-operate with

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others—all these factors which in everyday life may obstruct the workings of intelligence are eliminated or minimized in the test situation.

These features of intelligence tests largely obviate (again, as they are meant to) the need for any self criticism except of the most rudimentary kind. In performance tests there is some scope for observing the tendency to self criticism (conceived as a temperamental quality and not forming part of 'intelligence'), and occasionally direct penalties are imposed for errors. But most verbal tests of the kind in common use slightly penalize the cautious child who spends time making sure his answer is right, since the score is made to depend only on the amount of work done correctly, errors being merely ignored and not penalized. The buoyant child who goes ahead, unconcerned about possible mistakes, is slightly favoured ; and this illustrates the point, to be referred to later, that the sharp separation of cognitive performances from temperament and character is an artificiality which even these artificial tests cannot at present maintain successfully.

All this involves a vast difference between the capacity the testers assess and intelligence in the everyday sense, a difference that appears clearly enough if one observes that the tests, and the principles on which they are based, make no distinction between intelligent thinking and rationalization. Everyone knows that brilliant efforts of 'relational thinking' may contribute to fallacious self-justification. L. H. Myers ironically puts the case which the testers are committed to:

> 'Granted that Ali had an inborn instinct to shut his eyes and turn away from all knowledge that was inconvenient, did that make him a fool? If Ali had the art of avoiding experiences that were likely to teach him what he didn't want to know, was he the less intelligent for that? If he used his counterfeit knowledge of the world as a protection against deeper understanding, if his pretensions were primarily of service in deceiving himself, was that attitude necessarily a stupid one?'—(*The Root and the Flower*).

To continue with a direct inspection of the tests, a further fact that deserves more emphasis than it usually receives is that the problems to be solved and the kind of thinking required to

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solve them are clearly defined for the subject before he starts work. In ' real life,' by contrast, the more valuable kinds of thinking consist in becoming aware of the existence of new problems at least as much as in solving problems already defined and set before you. In ' real life,' moreover, instead of having the problem set you by an external authority you have to convince yourself of its importance and rely on your own integrity not to pass it by. Sensitiveness to the existence of a hitherto unnoticed problem presumably means a willingness to take seriously very slight discomforts of mind, faintly perceptible conflicts of attitude that in other people might pass unremarked or be dealt with by resistance or rationalization. The capacity to do this is not one that intelligence tests measure, nor does it enter into the conception of intelligence most widely current in psychology.

This limitation of the current notion is evidently some part of what F. R. Leavis has in mind when, referring to Max Eastman, he says, ' . . . he has none of that sensitiveness of intelligence without which all apparent vigour of thought is illusory. And when such a phrase as " sensitiveness of intelligence " suggests itself it begins to appear that the relation between " intelligence " and " sensibility " is not the simple distinction that is readily assumed.' (*For Continuity*).

The orthodox tester's reply to these objections, or doubts, would be that they are based on a misconception of what the tests aim at measuring. Binet, it is true, did at least pay lip service to self criticism as an aspect of intelligent behaviour, but the contemporary tester (*e.g.*, Knight, *op. cit.*) rejects this view, asserting that self criticism depends upon affective and conative factors, whereas the tests are meant to measure only cognitive capacity. For the same reason the capacity for sensitive discrimination would be regarded as beyond the purview of the tests. This sharp separation of cognitive functioning from the rest of mental life is essential to the logic of the tester's position.

But it seems very questionable whether this dividing line, artificial as it would generally be admitted to be, is useful enough to justify itself here. In unconscious rationalization, for example, the rationalizer certainly solves one problem (for instance the problem of saving his self-esteem in the face of poor work) by efficient relational thinking (for instance by blaming his tools).

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But actually he was faced with a wider problem and was being challenged to come to terms with a more serious misfortune (for instance the misfortune of being in the wrong occupation, or of needing for his happiness an inflated opinion of his own capacity). If you convinced him that he had been merely rationalizing he would find himself face to face once more with his original problem, unsolved. By means of the rationalization he has solved only a restricted part of the whole problem. He has, in fact, failed to observe its real extent, and his failure is at bottom a failure of sensitiveness. This narrowing of one's view must at all events be regarded as a failure of ' relational experiencing ' even if efficient ' relational thinking ' has been carried out at one small point within the whole. And it seems very doubtful whether, even from the academic point of view, any sharp line should be drawn between the two. From a broader point of view the distinction is hardly defensible.

Only one technical writer on intelligence—Thurstone—seems to have laid any stress on the affective background of thought, and his views have not been very widely considered, perhaps on account of the obscurity with which they were expressed. He, as a result of his general argument, is led to emphasize the continuity of psychological process that exists between manipulating cognitive elements and ordering less clearly formulated needs and impulses. ' Genius is essentially the capacity to deal effectively with our impulses at a stage of formation when they are still only roughly defined affective states, before they have absorbed enough attributes to become the cognitive terms with which most of us are limited in our field of rational control.' (*The Nature of Intelligence*, p. 84). It is this capacity that one has in mind in suggesting that some such term as ' relational experiencing,' jargon though it is, is useful for describing the broad activity of which relational thinking is a part.

Conceived in the way that Thurstone suggests, intelligence is bound to include sensitiveness to experience, to ' outer ' experience and to one's own interests and desires and values. It follows that this capacity also lies behind the discovery and formulation (as distinct from the mere solution) of many problems of the greatest cultural significance. And it seems likely that of all technical theories of intelligence Thurstone's would most

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commend itself to people interested in the subtler forms of experience, if it were expressed lucidly enough to gain any currency. Unfortunately it was enunciated so obscurely that misunderstanding is only too easy. Even Knight, in his excellent statement of the orthodox case for intelligence tests, seems to misrepresent it. His account of it illustrates the tendency of psychologists to think only in terms of the simpler external problems. He takes Thurstone to say merely that 'the person who becomes fully conscious of his impulses at an early stage in the process of satisfying them is more intelligent than the person whose awareness is delayed, because the earlier the point at which the impulse is made focal, the greater the range of possible actions that may be taken to satisfy it.' And he adds the just criticism of *this* assertion that awareness of the impulse is less important than selection of the means for satisfying it. I believe Thurstone, at his best at any rate, means something subtler than this. He is perhaps better represented in the following:

> 'The psychological act which is the central subject-matter of psychology becomes then the course of events, primarily mental, which intervene between the motive and the successful neutralization or satisfaction of that motive . . . Mental life consists primarily in the approximate formulation of the motives leading towards overt expression. To the extent that mental life is of a relatively high order these approximate formulations of the motives become more and more tentative, deliberate, inhibited, delayed, and subject to choice before precipitating into their final overt form.'

Intelligence conceived in these terms is not very adequately measured by the intelligence tests. They show rather the maximum capacity of their subject for exercising his intelligence, on the simplest *kind* of problem that can require relational thinking and in the most favourable circumstances. Most responsible psychologists would probably agree with this, or some such, statement of the case; but the advocates of testing include many besides responsible psychologists, and one would not always gather from them that the tests served so sharply limited a purpose. Perhaps psychologists as a whole have been at fault in not stressing explicitly enough the difference between what they measure and

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the richer and more confused notion of intelligence current in ordinary speech—the notion which makes 'intelligent' the opposite not only of 'dull-witted' but also of 'stupid.' We must expect psychology to abstract from the rich welter of meaning that attaches itself to the term, and to define various parts of the welter explicitly and separately; but we have a right to ask that the aspects of the general conception which are neglected shall also be made explicit. It is an illusion to suppose that the technical conception of intelligence has merely made more precise, without at the same time emasculating, the everyday conception.

But the testers' idea of intelligence cannot be regarded as something entirely isolated from current cultural tendencies. The technical conception was acceptable only because even for the non-technical mind the alertness and acuteness which the tests so well measure were coming to seem a more important part of 'intelligence' than anything else, and because the peculiar situation in which the tests place their subject was coming to seem less and less of a contrast with the important situations of everyday life. As so often happens, technical views were reflecting—and of course reinforcing—wider cultural trends.

It is for this reason that the limitations of the tests do not invalidate them as selection tests for education as we know it or for industry. The great mass of people—the great mass who produce the high correlations—are not required to be sensitive to new problems; the duties they must perform and the problems they must solve are thrust upon them ready-made. Self criticism is a hindrance to advancement. The success or failure of their work is not a matter for their judgment: external authority sets the standard and external indications show whether they have reached it or fallen below—bad work is returned by inspectors, sales are made or missed, one's quota of book-keeping is finished or not at the end of the day, the letters are or are not ready for signature. This is probably true of any work concerned at all directly with the satisfaction of material desires. It is not true of the more highly developed cultural activities which in a different society might be an important part of social life.

In a minor point also intelligence tests may possibly reflect a peculiar feature of industrial civilization. The scoring method which ignores errors corresponds to a fairly general tendency (to

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which there are admittedly many exceptions) for a large amount of satisfactory work to be taken as compensating for what in other civilizations might seem rather frequent slips and errors. Mass production dwarfs the significance of the occasional spoilt article ; mass employment, of the occasional accident. And in mass production firms a very considerable proportion of the staff is engaged in those duties of inspection and ' after-service ' which under other systems of work might have been the responsibility of the original worker. However it would be no more than speculation to suggest any connection between the habit of mind that tolerates rather frequent error in work and the method of scoring employed in intelligence testing. At the same time the parallel exists and is perhaps worth noting.

In other respects there can be little question but that the tests reflect the peculiarities of the civilization that produced them. Sometimes the testers say so. And it perhaps indicates sufficiently the justification there may be for non-technical criticism of intelligence tests to quote a remark made by Brigham (*A Study of American Intelligence*, 1923) when he rebuts the charge that the American Army tests stressed too much the 'hurry-up attitude' :

> ' If the tests used included some mysterious type of situation that was " typically American," we are indeed fortunate, for this is America, and the purpose of our inquiry is that of obtaining a measure of the character of our immigration. Inability to respond to a " typically American " situation is obviously an undesirable trait.'

D. W. HARDING.

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THE GREAT REVIEWS (II)

V.

IN their criticisms of novels, the Reviewers began by distinguishing two main classes: the novel of manners, including the work of Maria Edgeworth and Fanny Burney, and the novel of melodrama, comprising all the forgotten imitations of Mrs. Radcliffe. To these were soon added the numerous offspring of German sentimentality and sensationalism, and later Scott and the historical novel. The novel of manners was a typical eighteenth-century product, so it is natural that Maria Edgeworth should have been favourably treated by all the Reviews. Both the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, however, censured her lapses into a too obvious didacticism: in the *Quarterly* for March, 1812, Gifford declared:

> 'A novel, which is not in some degree a lesson either of morals or conduct is, we think, a production which the world might be quite as well without.'

but the reviewer of *Patronage* (January, 1814) warned the author that morality ought not to smell of the lamp. The *Edinburgh's* comments were similar. Jane Austen was ignored by the *Edinburgh*, but the *Quarterly* had two very favourable notices of her work. Scott, writing on *Emma* (Oct., 1815) comments upon the difficulty of preventing this kind of realistic description from developing into 'a mere sign-post likeness,' and mentions particularly, among her literary merits,

> 'neatness and point, and a quiet yet comic dialogue in which the characters of the speakers evolve themselves with dramatic effect . . . The subjects are not often elegant, and certainly never grand, but they are finished up to nature, and with a precision which delights the reader.

Archbishop Whately (Jan., 1821) approved particularly of her moral teaching:

> 'When this Flemish painting, as it were, is introduced, this accurate and unexaggerated delineation of events and characters,

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it necessarily follows, that a novel, which makes good its pretensions of giving a perfectly correct picture of common life, becomes a far more *instructive* work than one of equal or superior merit of the other class ; it guides the judgment, and supplies a kind of artificial experience.'

The Reviewers were particularly alive to the effect of the novel in moulding the emotional life of its public—what D. H. Lawrence called leading ' the flow of our sympathetic consciousness '—and this led to a concern for morality in fiction which meant in practice no mere prudery but a vigorous campaign against sentimentality and sensationalism. The *Edinburgh's* comment on a novel called *Charles et Marie* (April, 1803) is typical:

' Where the effect is to rise chiefly from delineations of the heart, an author may be tempted to think that his knowledge of the heart is great, precisely as he can, with any degree of apparent justice, deduce powerful emotions from slight events. We shall thus have all the feelings in their distorted, rather than their natural state, and be told to look upon the sickliness of artificial refinement as the very health and vigour of passion.'

Scott's reviews of Godwin's *Fleetwood* (*Edinburgh*, April, 1805) and *Fatal Revenge, or the Family of Montorio* (*Quarterly*, May 1810) are typical diagnoses of melodrama: of the former he says:

' There is no attempt to describe the minuter and finer shades of feeling: none of that high finishing of description by which the most ordinary incidents are rendered interesting: on the contrary, the effect is always sought to be brought out by the application of the inflated language of high passion.'

The *Quarterly* described *Frankenstein* as ' a tissue of horrible and disgusting absurdity' : the *Edinburgh* made short work of Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (July, 1821):

' Mr. Maturin has contrived to render his production almost as objectionable in the manner as it is in the matter . . . And as we can plainly perceive, among a certain class of writers a disposition to haunt us with similar apparitions and to describe them with a corresponding tumor of words, we conceive it high time to step forward and abate a nuisance which threatens to become a besetting evil, unless checked in its outset.'

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Lockhart, in his *Thoughts on Novel-Writing* (*Blackwood's*, Jan., 1819) discusses the growth of the novel of sentiment, an undesirable form, in reading which the will is inactive and the mind receives 'a temporary excitement, neither very pure in kind nor always agreeable to feel, from its want of harmony and consistency.' *Blackwood's* usually placed sentimentality and sensationalism quite adequately, though with less firmness than the older Reviews. The reviewer of Maturin's *Melmoth* (Nov., 1820) acknowledges his popularity and admits his sensational power, but warns him that even *The Mysteries of Udolpho* involved more thought and labour than works of this kind:

> 'He should remember that although his faults are not able to deprive him of the admiration of the present time, they may bid very fair to shut him out altogether, or nearly so, from the knowledge of posterity. He should remember that it is one thing to be an English classic, and another to occupy ample room and verge enough in every circulating library throughout the land.'

The novels of Scott were in general treated by the Reviews almost as an absolute value in fiction, but the chorus of praise was not entirely unqualified. Jeffrey's review of *Waverley* (Nov., 1814) remarks that it is obviously hastily and unskilfully written, and speaks of 'the laborious, tardy and obscure explanation of parts of the story that the reader would be better pleased to forget.' He describes the 'flippant and smart' style where the author speaks in his own person as 'considerably below mediocrity.' Even Gifford, in the *Quarterly* (July, 1814), expressed some doubt as to the value of historical novels as a class:

> 'We confess that we have, speaking generally, a great objection to what may be called historical romance, in which real and fictitious personages, and actual and fabulous events are mixed together to the utter confusion of the reader, and the unsettling of all accurate recollections of past transactions; and we cannot but wish that the ingenious and intelligent author of *Waverley* had rather employed himself in recording historically the character and transactions of his countrymen *Sixty Years Since* than in writing a work which, though it may be, in its facts, almost true, and in its delineations perfectly accurate,

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will yet, in sixty years hence, be regarded or rather, probably *disregarded*, as a mere romance, and the gratuitous invention of a facetious fancy.'

The *Quarterly* declared *Guy Mannering* (Jan., 1815) much inferior to *Waverley*, with many absurdities of plot and trite and hackneyed sensational incidents ; but in general the reviewers agreed with the popular verdict on Scott, and simply made comparisons between the various works. Occasionally there were absurdly extravagant comparisons with Shakespeare, and it became the fashion to bracket Scott with Cervantes, and to declare him superior to all the eighteenth-century English novelists. The *Quarterly's* review of *The Fortunes of Nigel* (July, 1822) sums up the later attitude:

' It seems to be generally admitted that the author is the greatest writer who has ever adorned this department of literature. It seems admitted, though with a less approach to unanimity, that his characters are superior to his plots, his humble to his higher life ; his Scotland to his England ; his tragedy to his comedy, and in general, his earlier to his later works.'

Various imitators of Scott, particularly Galt, Lockhart and Wilson, received general commendation ; *Blackwood's* especially praised Galt's naturalness and accuracy of observation of Scottish life. The praise of *Graham Hamilton* (June, 1822) shows what *Blackwood's* expected from a novelist:

' It presents a spirited picture of the manners and follies of the times, in that portion of society with which the reputed author may be supposed most familiar ; the characters are well drawn ; the story possesses considerable interest, and it has a moral kept sufficiently in view without being offensively obtruded upon the attention at every moment.'

The reviews of fiction in *Blackwood's* are often little more than summaries of the story of each novel, with long extracts, and a few general introductory remarks. On the whole the criticism of the novel in the Reviews is disappointing ; too often an elaborately judicial manner is found to be supported by no very acute discrimination. At the same time, the grosser examples of melodrama and sentimentality were firmly placed, and it should be remembered

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that it was a comparatively new development in criticism to treat the novel as a serious literary form at all. The *Quarterly's* novel reviews were the most satisfactory ; it dealt adequately with the ' Fashionable Novels ' of the 'twenties, and rarely pretended that the second or third rate was anything else.

VI.

The chief problem in the criticism of the drama was to account for the decadent state it had reached, and then to suggest some possible means of rejuvenation. At first we find the *Edinburgh* discussing whether the moderns ought to write on the French model or the Elizabethan, and deciding chiefly in favour of the Elizabethan, though efforts like Lamb's *John Woodvil* met with short shrift, and Joanna Baillie was criticized for the obvious nature of her borrowings. The German influence, represented particularly by Kotzebue and Schiller, was considered uniformly pernicious. The reviewer of Barry Cornwall's *Dramatic Scenes* (*Blackwood's*, June, 1819) defended poetic drama and unrealistic conventions:

> ' Without poetry we could have no worthy drama. It would never do for the imaginary beings who move across the stage to be bound down to the language of real life, any more than to be clothed in its habiliments . . . The language of drama . . . cannot be the language of life—for its characters are not the characters of life . . . No living man ever spoke as Macbeth speaks. Indeed, all the principal characters of Shakespeare use a language which is anything but natural, if by natural be meant that of real life.'

He describes the language of most drama since Shakespeare as ' a sort of measured and monotonous slang,' and praises Joanna Baillie, Coleridge and Maturin for trying to restore the Elizabethan dramatic verse. On the other hand, the writer of the article *On the Drama, Ducis' Shakespeare and Jouy's Sylla* (April, 1822) emphasizes the necessity for drama to have its roots in the people, and ascribes the decline to the narrowing process which took place after the Restoration. Byron and Scott, he says, will never write tragedies:

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> 'All those pretty affectations that mark the *petit-maître* of the day, and they go off very well over a tea-table, pass for nothing in the huge ear of a theatrical assemblage. It is nonsense to say that a writer should consult but his own taste ; it must be influenced, be it ever so unconsciously, by floating opinion, and the more secluded he lives, the more will he be influenced by the little he does hear.'

It is no use copying the sixteenth century style, since it is manifestly unnatural to a modern ; and in any case the Elizabethans have been over-rated:

> 'As to Mr. Lambe, he deserves to be hanged for wasting talent, like the Schlegels, in making silk purses out of sows' ears.'

Similarly the *Edinburgh* reviewer of Byron's *Sardanapalus* (Feb., 1822) concludes that the moderns suffer from being too obviously and too consciously imitators of the Elizabethans:

> '. . . they speak an unnatural dialect, and are constrained by a masquerade habit ; in neither of which is it possible to display that freedom and those delicate traits of character which are the life of the drama.'

The *Quarterly* (*Brutus* and *Evadne*, Jan., 1820) objected to the hybrid 'dramatic poem,' and lamented the lack of judgment among theatre audiences:

> 'We do not remember a single good tragedy of modern date ; Mr. Coleridge's *Remorse* and Mr. Milman's *Fazio*, indeed, considered merely as proofs of poetic talent are distinguished performances, though we think them . . . very imperfect as plays. But . . . their fate seems to be decided in a way still less creditable to their judges. Chance, caprice, anything but true principles appears to direct the judgment of a first audience.'

In the earlier numbers of the *Edinburgh* there are several passages showing that the reviewers still regarded character in drama as *part* of the total effect in the eighteenth century manner, and had not yet adopted the nineteenth century dogma that it was all-important, especially the review of Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* (July, 1803):

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> ' The skilful delineation of character is no doubt among the highest objects of the drama, but this has been so generally admitted, that it was the less necessary to undervalue all the rest. The true object of the drama is to interest and delight ; and this it can frequently accomplish by incident, as well as by character.'

In a consideration of a French tragedy, by Raynouard (*Edinburgh*, Oct., 1806) there is a remark that has obvious bearings on the later developments of Shakespearean criticism:

> ' The admirers of poetry would not thank the antiquary who should prefix to *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* a clear and indubitable statement of the events on which these tragedies are founded.'

But in August, 1824, *Blackwood's* made an elaborate defence of Joanna Baillie against the *Edinburgh's* earlier criticisms and the writer of an article on the *Causes of the Decline of the British Drama* (July, 1822) applies a completely realistic criterion: —' dramatic—that is to say, like *life*.' The logical conclusion of this tendency is Hartley Coleridge's essay *On the Character of Hamlet* (Nov., 1828) with its notorious suggestion:

> ' Let us, for a moment, put Shakespeare out of the question, and consider Hamlet as a real person, a recently deceased acquaintance. In real life it is no unnatural thing to meet with characters every whit as obscure as that of the Prince of Denmark.'

But in 1828 this attitude was still far from general.

VII.

At the beginning of its career, the *Edinburgh* showed a hearty contempt for the discussion of the theory of criticism:

> ' In matters of taste . . . we conceive that there are no discoveries to be made, any more than in matters of morality. The end of poetry is to please, and men cannot be mistaken as to what has actually given them pleasure.'

But this eighteenth century confidence (Oct., 1805: review of Southey's *Madoc*) did not last long. Already in 1806 we find

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Hallam reviewing Knight's *Principles of Taste*, in a typically common sense essay. He begins by defining the various uses of the word 'taste,' selecting for his own purposes the meaning: 'the power of discrimination in the fine arts, or the feeling associated with it.' He makes short work of those who, like Knight, deny any positive standards; and proceeds to assign three causes of divergence in taste—insensibility, insufficient knowledge, and hastiness of decision. On the last point he remarks:

> 'This practice of "judging by perception" (that is, we presume, according to our first impressions) has conduced to make taste appear uncertain and capricious.'

and he concludes with a warning against the warping of critical judgment by personal associations. Discussion of the principles of criticism often leads to discussion of the duties of the critic, and there are many passages which show the reviewers to have been fully conscious of their responsibilities. In a review of James Montgomery's poems (Jan., 1807) Jeffrey says:

> 'It is hard to say what numbers of ingenious youth may be led to expose themselves in public, by the success of this performance, or what addition may be made in a few months to that great sinking fund of bad taste, which is daily wearing down the debt which we have so long owed to the Classical writers of antiquity.'

His review of *The Lady of the Lake* (Aug., 1810) contains a long discussion of the relation between popularity and intrinsic value:

> 'The great multitude, even of the reading world, must necessarily be uninstructed and injudicious, and will frequently be found, not only to derive pleasure from what is worthless in finer eyes, but to be quite insensible of those beauties which afford the most exquisite delight to more cultivated understandings.'

Good judges, on the other hand, are

> 'in that very state . . . to which all who are in any degree capable of tasting those refined pleasures would certainly arrive if their sensibility were increased, and their experience and

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reflection enlarged. It is difficult, therefore, to avoid considering them as in the right, and calling their taste the true and the just one, when it appears that it is such as is uniformly produced by the cultivation of those faculties upon which all our perceptions of taste so obviously depend.'

The *Quarterly* reviewer of Repton's *Fragments on Landscape Gardening* (Jan., 1817) quotes with approval a passage from the book in which Repton has been discussing those ' whose ideas of perfection are contained in a few words, " I know what pleases myself " ' :

> ' But the man of good taste endeavours to investigate the causes of the pleasure he receives, and to inquire whether others receive pleasure also. He knows that the same principles which direct taste in the polite arts, direct the judgment in morality, that the knowledge of what is good whether in actions, in manners, in language, in arts, or science, constitutes the basis of good taste, and marks the distinction between the higher ranks of society and the inferior orders of mankind, whose daily labours allow no leisure for other enjoyments than those of mere sensual, individual or personal gratification.'

The reviewer of Milman's *Samor* (*Quarterly*, Dec., 1818) was pessimistic about contemporary criticism (though the state of affairs he implies in his very complaints seems wholly admirable in comparison with modern conditions) and blamed particularly the type of criticism which attempts to be itself creative literature:

> ' How should the *genus irritabile* respect the opinions of the modern critic? They see in him in general an ambitious rival, one who approaches them most injudiciously on their own ground, who is not intent upon laying before the world a fair examination of their faults and beauties but solicitous only that the critique should be at least as shining and poetical as the poem itself.'

The result is that the poet neglects all rules—' no one aims at producing a perfect poem . . . but to give proof by brilliant flashes that he might if he pleased have written such a poem '—and the legitimate function of criticism is not fulfilled:

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> 'Now we hate the cant of criticism as much as any wit or poet of any age or nation . . . but of criticism itself rightly employed, we will say that the poet who denies its jurisdiction has never thoroughly considered, and does not rightly understand, the real nature of the poetic character.'

A typical concern for the maintenance of standards is shown in Southey's review of Dr. Sayers' *Works* (*Quarterly*, Jan., 1827):

> 'The mediocrists may more truly be said to withdraw their contemporaries from the contemplation of what is excellent in their respective arts, so far as they succeed in obtaining attention for themselves. And successful they frequently are; in spite of Horace's sentence, men and booksellers favour them, whatever the Gods may do.'

There are many instances in *Blackwood's* of the same consciousness of responsibility. The essay *On the Reciprocal Influence of the Periodical Publications and the Intellectual Progress of this Country* (Nov., 1824) comments on the part played by the Reviews in raising the standard of public thought and feeling, and declares:

> 'The intellect of the country . . . cannot advance in strength and influence over the condition and the happiness of the community; it cannot be raised to that standard to which it is capable of reaching, while the reasoning powers are weak and the taste is bad.
>
> Taste . . . may, indeed, be produced and nourished simply by the perusal of works of a high standard; but if so produced and nourished, it is apt to partake too much of mere feeling, to be too much under the authority of example, and it can scarcely escape being contaminated by some elements of weakness and error. Whereas, if the mind is prepared for the perusal of such works by an insight into the principles of taste, the progress will be more steady and regular, and the object in view will be obtained in its highest purity, and placed on its firmest and securest basis.'

In May, 1822, there appeared a very interesting *Letter on the Different stages of Taste*, which aimed at showing that 'certain principles of classification as to the qualities and grades of feeling, have an existence *in rerum natura*.' The same insistence on

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emotional discrimination as the most important duty of the critic appears again in the comparison between Hazlitt and Jeffrey (*Blackwood's*, June, 1818):

> 'But the intellectual faculties of a critic are not the sole means to be employed in forming his judgments. His moral constitution should be as much awake to sentiment as his understanding to the relation of ideas. To estimate the truth and propriety of different tones of feeling is even a more difficult task, in some cases, than to reason. I do not allude so much to the appreciation of what is morally beautiful and decorous between man and man, for there we have the accumulated suffrages of ages and of multitudes to appeal to. The most difficult questions in morals are those which relate to the temper of mind with which the world and the business of life ought to be contemplated, since the propriety of our feelings, on those subjects, must depend on very extended and complicated considerations.'

The essay on *Eloquence* (Sept., 1820) sums up this belief in the importance of literature and literary criticism in the assertion:

> 'Civilization has essentially subsisted among men, neither in the security of law, nor in the invention of the arts of life, but in the condition of the minds of those who have held the highest places of society.'

At the same time, however, there were signs in *Blackwood's* of the beginnings of an attitude to criticism which was to become more and more popular throughout the following century. The typical statement of this point of view is to be found in the article *On Literary Censorship* (Nov., 1818):

> 'Literature should be generous and aspiring . . . the best we can expect from criticism is a refreshing shower, or a stirring breeze . . . We cannot make power; but we can cherish and invite its natural growth, or we can repress it.'

But this was still very much the minority view.

All the Reviews contain articles emphasizing the importance of directing a keen critical scrutiny upon the words in which a poet expresses himself: an essay in *Blackwood's On the Study of*

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Language as essential to the Cultivation of Literature (April, 1819) insists that criticism of style is at the same time criticism of the writer's personality:

> 'For in the study of the words of language we seek to feel their beauty and power as parts of living speech . . . This perception of the force of words is at once severely exact, delicate and passionate . . . In fact, the study of the form by which the mind is to express itself, is at the same time the study of that mind which is to find expression in such a form.'

The *Quarterly* reviewer of Milman's *Fazio* (April, 1816) deals with this same question, in censuring Milman for an 'unnatural and artificial sustainment of language':

> 'Some part of the frequency of this fault may be attributed to the common error in books of criticism of considering the qualities of diction distinctly from those of matter, the mode of expression from the thing expressed. Such a separation either in theory or practice is false and dangerous. The former ought clearly to be in entire dependence on the latter. If diction can for a moment be separated from thought, then verses composed at random, of words selected from a Poetical Dictionary, may have *some* value, while, on the other hand, if thoughts alone confer value on words, the whole efforts of criticism should be directed to the right cultivation and regulation of the mental powers.'

The *Edinburgh* provides several examples of intelligent analysis of a poet's use of language. The reviewer of Moore's *Anacreon* (July, 1803) remarks:

> 'We meet with rosy bonds, rosy rays, rosy forms, rosy bosoms, and a number of other odd rosy things . . . We suppose that to a listless Arcadian reader the diction has the effect of introducing a number of very agreeable and confused images; but it only reminds the attentive critic of the little artifices of poetry, and puts him on his guard against their effect.'

or again, Jeffrey comments in his review of *Lalla Rookh* (Nov., 1817) on the 'profusion of gems and sweets':

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> 'We have spoken of these as faults of style—but they could hardly have existed without going deeper; and though they strike us at first as qualities of the composition only, we find, upon a little reflection, that the same general character belongs to the fable, the characters and the sentiments—that they all sin alike in the excess of their means of attraction—and fail to interest, chiefly by being too interesting.'

Scattered throughout the pages of the Reviews there are interesting asides on various critical problems: rhythm, the difficulties of translation, the function and value of poetry, and so on. The following discussion of the difference between the methods of poetry and prose is by an *Edinburgh* reviewer who shows elsewhere in the article a thorough knowledge of Coleridge; it occurs in a review of a number of anthologies (April, 1825):

> 'The grand distinction, in short, which exists between poetry and prose, is, that the former (independently of its principle of elevation) presents two or more ideas, linked or massed together, where the latter would only offer one. And hence arises the comparative unpopularity of the latter with ordinary readers, who prefer humble rhyme to poetry, and a single idea to a complicated one, inasmuch as it saves them from the fatigue of thinking.'

It is interesting to compare the conception of poetry implied here with that of Macaulay's famous essay on Milton (Aug., 1825):

> 'He who in an enlightened and literary society, aspires to be a great poet, must first become as a little child.'

The various attitudes taken by the Reviewers to the question of morality in literature show, as one might expect, a vacillation between the good sense of the eighteenth century and the squeamishness of the Victorians. At first one finds, along with the commonplace that art should contain moral instruction, the kind of intelligence shown by the following comment on a bad novel:

> 'The *moral effect* of a work ought perhaps to be the same with its *moral*, but it is not always so; and under correction, it forms a far more important subject of inquiry.'

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or by Sydney Smith's diagnosis of a favourite type of sensationalism at the end of his review of *Delphine* (' this dismal trash ') in the *Edinburgh* for April, 1803:

> ' It is in vain to say that the fable evinces in the last act, that vice is productive of misery. We may decorate a villain with graces and felicities for nine volumes, and hang him in the last page. This is not teaching virtue, but gilding the gallows, and raising up splendid associations in favour of being hanged.'

The later attitude is shown in the *Edinburgh's* approval of Bowdler's *Family Shakespeare* (Oct., 1821). On this particular subject the *Quarterly* was much more sensible ; a footnote in the review of Schlegel's *Cours de Littérature Dramatique* (Oct., 1814) deals with the proposed expurgation:

> ' We live in an age of pedantic affectation and exaggerated sensibility . . . Among the most extraordinary attempts at moral improvement, none, perhaps, is better calculated to excite a sarcastic smile than the publication of a " Family Shakespeare " from which all objectionable passages are expunged. This is Jack tearing off Lord Peter's coat, with a vengeance!'

In general the *Quarterly* was more easily shocked than the *Edinburgh*, but in many cases, as in its dealings with sensational fiction, the moral concern turns out to be part of a genuine seriousness. *Blackwood's* had similar moral prejudices, amply illustrated in their articles on the Cockney School and Byron, but there are several instances of shrewd attacks on squeamishness and cant which show that the eighteenth century common sense was still flourishing. An article on Jeremy Collier (July, 1820) denounces the inconsistencies of recent taste in drama:

> ' With a passion for tragic characters of the most overwrought and unnatural atrocity, we have weakened our comedy by a morbid fastidiousness, which is perhaps a leading cause of the present striking inferiority, or rather, comparative extinction of this species of writing . . . The cant of delicacy has done ten times the injury to the drama that sheer downright fanaticism has ever done.'

In the fifteenth *Noctes* (June, 1824) Odoherty comments on the Chancellor's attempts at censorship:

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> 'Discountenancing *Don Juan*—strangling Byron's memoirs (so far as the English MS. was in question). Fine doings—fine doings—we shall be a pretty nation soon, I calculate.'

while in the thirty-ninth *Noctes* (Nov., 1828) the Shepherd, in a spirited defence against the accusation that the *Noctes* are indelicate, asserts:

> 'There canna, sir, be a mair fatal symptom o' the decline and corruption o' national morals than what's ca'd squeamishness.'

These and similar passages should be taken into account as a counterweight to the shocked horror of the comments on *Prometheus Unbound* and *Don Juan*.

VIII.

The critical vigilance of the Reviews when faced with the unequal, the mediocre, or the utterly worthless, could be illustrated from almost any number. Many of these articles are extremely lively and amusing, as for instance Sydney Smith's disposal of Dr. Langford's Sermon in the first number of the *Edinburgh*, or his account of Lewis's *Alfonso* in the second. It was Sydney Smith, of course, who referred to a dull book of *Voyages en Islande* as 'this very tedious and authentic book.' The reviewer of Mant's *Poems* (*Edinburgh*, Oct., 1807) refuses to encourage mediocrity:

> 'Though we are happy to tell him that we think his talents respectable, yet we feel it a duty to announce to him that we have not been able to discern in his works any of the tokens of immortality; and to caution him not to put himself in the way of more unmerciful critics.'

Moore's review of Lord Thurlow's *Poems* (*Edinburgh*, Aug., 1814) is a witty castigation:

> 'Lord Thurlow . . . loves the Muse with a warmth which makes us regret that the passion is not mutual.'

'Book-making' was severely treated, in whatever form it manifested itself: the following extract is from a review of Hayley's life of Cowper, in the fifth number of the *Edinburgh*:

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'Mr. Hayley seems to have exerted himself to conciliate readers of every description, not only by the most lavish and indiscriminate praise of every individual he has occasion to mention, but by a general spirit of approbation and indulgence towards every practice and opinion which he has found it necessary to speak of. Among the other symptoms of book-making which this publication contains, we can scarcely forbear reckoning the expressions of this obsequious and unoffending philanthropy.'

The *Quarterly* had some amusing ironical summaries of third-rate novels: the reviewer of Maturin's *Women, or Pour et Contre* (Dec., 1818) pretended that the book was a satire and praised it for giving such a thorough exposure of sensational fiction. Mrs. Barbauld's satire *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* was greeted with cheerful scepticism:

'Our old acquaintance Mrs. Barbauld turned satirist! The last thing we should have expected, and now that we have seen her satire, the last thing that we could have desired.'

On Lord John Russell's tragedy, *Don Carlos*, Croker pronounced the following verdict (July, 1823):

'In tragic poetry, some little may be done by intensity of feeling without power of intellect; but nothing by power of intellect without intensity of feeling. In both these qualities we consider this writer to be mainly deficient. We do not mean that he has not his fair share of understanding, or that his feelings may not be lively enough to give harmony and pleasure to domestic intercourse. Were the noble author a young man emerging into literary life, it would be our duty to warn him against engaging too seriously in a pursuit to which his powers appear so inadequate.'

At a time when literary albums were at the height of their vogue the *Quarterly* commented on a batch of them (Oct., 1827):

'Are the classics of our age to continue to see their beautiful fragments doled out year after year in the midst of such miserable and mawkish trash as fills at least nineteen pages out of every twenty in the best of the gaudy duodecimos now before us? It

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is admitted on every hand that there are few good painters among us, and very few good engravers ; and it is admitted by all but the editors of the " pretty pocket-books " themselves that there are not many good writers. Why should publishers of eminence go on year after year encouraging that busy mediocrity in letters, which even the humblest of their brethren would blush to patronize in the arts?'

Blackwood's was equally unwilling to pretend, like the America lady mentioned by Arnold, that excellence was common and abundant. The reviewer of *The Martyr of Antioch* (March, 1822) accuses Milman of being the *enfant gâté* of criticism:

' There may be some minds so constituted as to thrive better under this sort of general favour than under any other treatment, but we think that the event has shown that it is not so in the case of Mr. Milman . . . In these volumes he has exhibited no ordinary command over the resources of the poetical language . . . But . . . *what have these four volumes added to the literature of England?* Would our literature have been a whit less complete than it is had Mr. Milman never published one line of all he has written? We are afraid that there is but one answer which any candid man can make to this trying question . . . The fact is, that Mr. Milman appears to have entirely neglected those habits of sincere self-examination, by means of which alone the power of intellect can be built up higher and higher.'

The article on Hayley's *Memoirs* (Sept., 1823) is an example of *Blackwood's* in a more outspoken mood:

' William Hayley was, beyond all doubt, the most distinguished driveller of his age. Devoted to literature upwards of threescore years—constantly reading or writing, or talking with reading and writing people, ambitious of literary fame, not without a sort of dozing industry, and at all times inspired with an unsuspecting confidence in his own powers, flattered by a pretty extensive circle of personal friends, petted by the Blues, and generally in high odour with the gentlemen of the periodical press—it is certainly rather a little singular, that never once, on any occasion whatever, great or small, did one original idea,

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or the semblance of one, accidentally find its way for a single moment into his head.'

Modern criticism is more polite, but it would be very difficult to contend that in order to achieve good manners it was either desirable or necessary to sacrifice this kind of alertness and sense or responsibility. Politeness, too, has its own possible corruptions: it would be a mistake, for instance, to suppose that because the Reviews accused each other of the practice of puffing that the puff was more common then than now. The real difference is that to-day it is ungentlemanly to suggest that such a thing as puffing exists, whereas in the time of the Reviews puffing was sure to meet with a speedy and thorough exposure. *Blackwood's Magazine* published adverse reviews of Blackwood's own publications; and it dealt amusingly with Colburn's attempts at modern advertising methods. He rashly announced a number of forthcoming novels as 'Works of the First Importance': *Blackwood's* seized on the phrase and for a long time insisted on referring to every novel of Colburn's which was under review as 'this work of the First Importance . . .'

There are several passages in which the reviewers defend their own plain speaking. Jeffrey's review of Hogg's *Queen's Wake* (*Edinburgh*, Nov., 1814) is typical:

> 'The great end of public criticism, we hope our readers are aware, is not the improvement of those who are its immediate objects, but public example and information; and therefore it is that we seek to exercize it chiefly on authors who have obtained some degree of notoriety—their errors being by far the most dangerous, and their excellences the most likely to attract imitation. It is for the same reason that it is generally of greater consequence to point out the faults than the beauties of writers who have risen to distinction: for this distinction . . . is the natural reward of their beauties, while their faults are often so mixed up with their general merits that unless they are clearly discriminated they are extremely apt to be praised along with them and sometimes even imitated in their stead.'

The reviewer of Maria Edgeworth's *Patronage* (*Edinburgh*, Jan., 1814) welcomes writers who are capable of standing up to criticism:

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> 'It is indeed delightful now and then to meet with authors who neither dread the lash nor the spur; whose genius is of that vigorous and healthful constitution as to allow the fair and ordinary course of criticism to be administered without fear that their rickety bantlings may be crushed in the correction . . . Such a writer is Miss Edgeworth.'

There seems little more to say, except to point to the state of modern reviewing: it is obvious which is the healthier attitude to criticism.

IX.

The homogeneity of the reading public at this time is well illustrated by the fact that the poems of Clare, which were published by a provincial bookseller, did not escape the notice of the *Quarterly*: Southey gave them a favourable and encouraging review in May, 1820. Jeffrey, reviewing Crabbe's *Tales* (Nov., 1812), remarked:

> 'In this country, there are probably not less than two hundred thousand persons who read for amusement and instruction among the middling classes of society. In the higher classes there are not as many as twenty thousand.'

but he is confident that a great part of the larger body are 'to the full as well-educated and as high-minded as the smaller.' All the Reviews showed great faith in the spread of education and they were generally confident that this happy state of affairs could be maintained. An article *On the Effects of Knowledge upon Society* (*Blackwood's*, Oct., 1818) makes important reservations:

> 'If reading communicates vigour to their internal spring [that of the passions and sentiments] and increases their impulsive power, then everything is to be expected from the diffusion of knowledge; but if reading enervates them and renders them passive, there can be no doubt that the splendour of human existence will diminish in proportion.'

The reviewer of Schlegel's *History of Literature* (*Blackwood's*, Aug., 1818) questions whether the modern age has the same right to congratulate itself on developments in the arts as on its progress in useful knowledge, and speaks of the 'triumph of the *philosophes*':

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> 'Even the common people begin to take more pride in having some general ideas than in retaining that warmth of attachment to one set of objects which entirely depends, as they have been told, upon ignorance of that which is beyond their circle. The travelling regiments of books which pour in their heterogeneous impressions from the four quarters of the heavens, level all peculiarities before them, and turn the private enclosures of attachment and opinion into a thoroughfare. When the mind is artificially supplied, by means of books, with more sources of sentiment than are able at once harmoniously to keep possession of it, the speculative understanding steps in to settle their claims, and concludes by leaving the whole man in a woful state of obliteration.'

The prophetic awareness of this writer may be compared with the even more penetrating essay by Carlyle in the *Edinburgh* for June, 1829, called *Signs of the Times*:

> 'Were we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical or Moral Age, but above all others, the Mechanical Age . . . Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery but the internal and spiritual also. Here too, nothing follows its spontaneous course, nothing is left to be accomplished by old, natural methods. Everything has its cunningly devised implements, its pre-established apparatus, it is not done by hand but by machinery . . . These things, which we state lightly enough here, are yet of deep import, and indicate a mighty change in our whole manner of existence. For the same habit regulates, not our modes of action alone, but our modes of thought and feeling. Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand . . . At no former era has Literature, the printed communication of Thought, been of such importance as it is now . . . The true Church of England, at this moment, lies in the Editors of its Newspapers.'

But even Carlyle is not unduly pessimistic; although he admits that literature is itself not unaffected by the trend of the new industrial civilization, he does not consider it impossible for it to take over these immense new responsibilities. In 1829 it was still possible to be optimistic, particularly in regard to the state of

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periodical criticism. In the April number of *Blackwood's*, the forty-second *Noctes* contained a discussion on criticism between North and the Shepherd:

North Now—all our philosophical criticism—or nearly all—is periodical ; and fortunate that it is so both for taste and genius. It is poured daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, into the veins of the people, mixing with their heart and blood. Nay, it is like the very air they breathe . . . Our current periodical literature teems with thought and feeling, James,—with passion and imagination . . . Who so elevated in intellectual rank as to be entitled to despise such a Periodical Literature?

Shepherd Nae leevin' man—nor yet dead ane.

North The whole surface of society, James, is thus irrigated by a thousand streams ; some deep—some shallow.

Shepherd And the shallow are sufficient for the purpose o' irrigation.

I think that the above extracts show that these claims were not unreasonable. The Reviews made mistakes, they allowed themselves to be influenced on occasion by political and social feeling, they expressed themselves impolitely and sometimes brutally. On the other hand their prejudices, like those of Johnson, are obvious, and it is easy to make allowance for them: at the same time their offences, which have been greatly exaggerated by a more sentimentally genteel race of critics, are seen on examination to be very small in comparison with their solid merits of seriousness and critical conscientiousness. They never doubted that literature deserved the serious concern of the adult intelligence, and that it was their business to maintain standards of taste which had behind them the consensus of educated opinion. They consistently refused to pretend that excellence was ' common and abundant,' and with their extraordinary influence and authority, they played the major part in creating for the writers of their age that informed, intelligent and critical public without which no literature can survive for very long, and which is so conspicuously lacking to-day.

R. G. Cox.

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ABRAHAM COWLEY AND THE DECLINE OF METAPHYSICAL POETRY

COWLEY'S epitaph in Westminster Abbey, hailing him as 'Anglorum Pindarus, Flaccus, Maro, Deliciæ Decus, Desiderium Aevi Sui' represents the height of his contemporary éclat. His friend Sprat[1] also wrote an obituary eulogy, but here, if one discounts the more obvious excesses, the impressions of the man and his work remain the most satisfactory critique that has been written of him. His reputation had fallen low by the end of the century, but though the interest of critics has been directed towards different portions of his work, he has always been looked upon as an important minor poet. As far as one can gather from comparisons made and the kind of praise and blame bestowed upon him he has stood at a very similar level in the estimation of Addison, Hurd,[2] Johnson, Coleridge,[3] Lamb, Mr. Havelock Ellis,[4] Professor Grierson, M. Loiseau,[5] and Mr. Nethercot.[6] This rather motley company suggests that Cowley's poetry is both varied in style and that it is probably possible for the critic to 'read into it,' to find more of the quality that he happens to find congenial, than is actually there.

Cowley's versatility—or perhaps adaptability would be a more suitable word in his case—was indeed remarkable. There is ample

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[1] *An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Abraham Cowley*, prefixed to Cowley's Works, 1668.

[2] *Select Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley*, with Preface and Notes, 1772. The best selection. Notes contain much period and some permanent interest.

[3] *Miscellaneous Criticism*, edited by T. Raysor, *passim*.

[4] *Abraham Cowley*, 'The New Statesman,' July 12th, 1919, Vol. XIII. Admirable brief survey.

[5] *Abraham Cowley : Sa vie : son œuvre*. A lengthy *thèse*.

[6] *Abraham Cowley ; The Muse's Hannibal*. Standard biography.

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evidence that he was an extremely self-conscious writer, much preoccupied by the problems raised by the business of putting words on paper. Sprat tells us that he was planning a discourse on Style at the time of his death ; whether this would have come nearer to practice than a fashionable Horatian *ars poetica* we do not know, but the *Ode. Of Wit, To the Muse* and his prefaces certainly have a place among the useful pieces of self-criticism that poets have left behind them. He seems to have searched all his life for his appropriate mode of expression, with frequent partial but never complete success. His versatility was of a kind that springs from weakness of creative talent. It led him repeatedly to produce work which so fully embodied the taste of his contemporaries that they could not help taking it for better than it really was, and his lack of precision and strength also assisted, for example, eighteenth century readers in breathing in ' that moral air ' which they enjoyed from any of his poems that happened to take their fancy. Further, Cowley has a polite but friendly tone and was evidently a likeable man; 'he had indeed a perfect natural goodness . . . He had a great integrity and plainness of manners . . . He understood the forms of good-breeding enough to practise them without burdening himself or others.'[7] Though it has been said that his most sustained achievement, *The Essays, in Verse and Prose*, contain the quintessence of Cowley, it seems to me that one can find in every manner he attempted successes sufficiently sure to be taken as essential factors in the establishment of his poetic genius, and that it is impossible to trace a steady line of development through his works. When one says that his poetry marks the transition from the Metaphysical and Cavalier Schools to that of Dryden, one must, although one is stating a fact, guard oneself carefully against misconceptions. The rather complex case is that in Cowley's poetry of every period of his life one can find much Metaphysical verse showing representative symptoms of decay and verse in newer modes still exhibiting signs of immaturity ; he wrote excellent couplets in the *Davideis* between 1638 and 1640 and the Metaphysical *Hymn to Light* after 1663. All one can say is that the general tendency is decidedly towards the Restoration.[8] In this essay I shall deal mainly with Cowley's

[7]Sprat's *Life*.

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Donnean and Jonsonian verse, comparing his weaknesses with those of his fellow poets, and pointing out the new qualities that appear in it, with indications of what they were to grow into.

The *Ode. of Wit* provides a valuable opening. Johnson, whose particular criticisms of Cowley are in strong contrast to his damning generalizations, commented: ' It was about the time of Cowley that Wit, which had been till then used for *Intellection*, in contradistinction to *Will*, took the meaning which it now (1779) bears.' That Jonson singled out Cowley as the most representative *and* the best Metaphysical poet, and found in him something which seemed so familiar that he could take it as a fundamental and universal assumption which one did not need to try to define, is significant and important. The spirit of his poetry was peculiarly congenial to the eighteenth century and he does in fact mark the birth of the Augustan mode. F. R. Leavis has shown in detail[9] how the *wit* of Cowley and after him Dryden differed from that of Donne and Jonson, Carew and Marvell. A narrowing and at the same time a coarsening of sensibility took place. For comparative purposes Metaphysical and Jonsonian wit might be defined as a spiritual and intellectual poise, Restoration wit as a social poise. Criticism that is actually focussed on contemporary writing is rare in the first half of the seventeenth century, but it seems to me that in his *Elegie on Dr. Donne* Carew presents us with a conception of wit which covers the whole creative process, for example in the lines:

> Since to the awe of thy imperious wit
> Our stubborne language bends, made only fit
> With her tough-thick-rib'd hoopes to gird about
> Thy Giant phansie, which had prov'd too stout
> For this soft melting Phrases.

Johnson's *Intellection* obviously describes some more limited poetic quality, what one might call the play of the critical intelligence over the emotional content of the poem, ' a recognition, implicit

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[8]One might also say that Cowley was the last seventeenth century Spenserian poet, but very little criticism of his school poetry is possible.

[9]*Revaluation*, Chap. 1.

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in the expression of every experience, of other kinds of experience which are possible.' The Restoration had a very different idea of how poetry is written, resulting from the scientific movement and the changes in social life ; Hobbes had written,

> ' Time and Education begets Experience ; Experience begets memory ; Memory begets Judgments and Fancy ; Judgment begets the strength and structure, and Fancy begets the ornaments of a Poem,'[10]

and Dryden compared ' wit ' to a ' nimble spaniel.' In its more limited sense ' wit ' came in practice to be more or less analogous to social tact. Sir Richard Blackmore says that is ' raises and enlivens cold sentiments and plain Propositions, by giving them an elegant and surprising turn.'[11] Nevertheless, the spiritual and intellectual poise which characterizes the schools of Donne and Jonson comprehends a social sense and an urbanity near akin to that which we associate with the Augustans and is often present in them (see Donne's *Letter to Sir Henry Wotton at his going Ambassador to Venice*).

A further quotation from Hobbes will show how closely the change in the attitude to poetry was bound up with the changes in the nature of society:

> ' That which giveth a Poem the true and natural Colour consisteth in two things ; which are *To know well*, that is to have the images of nature in the memory distinct and clear ; and *To know much*. A signe of the first is perspicuity, propriety, and decency . . .
>
> From *knowing much*, proceedeth the admirable variety and novelty of Metaphors and Similitudes . . . And the want thereof compelleth a Writer to expressions that are either defac'd by time, or sullied with vulgar and long use.'

A certain fullness of life was being deliberately dropped out of English poetry in the name of the social and scientific virtues of decorum and correctness.

It seems to me that Cowley's *Of Wit* stands between my

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[10]Answer to Davenant.

[11]*An Essay upon Wit*, in *Essays upon Several Subjects*, 1716.

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quotations from Carew[12] and Hobbes, both as to critical theory and poetic practice, and it is the more interesting in that the latter was certainly in frequent contact with him in the English exiled colony in Paris where he probably wrote the Ode. F. R. Leavis says that here Cowley ' expounds and discusses wit in a manner and spirit quite out of resonance with the Metaphysical mode—quite alien and uncongenial to it ; with a reasonableness that has little to do with the ' tough reasonableness ' underlying Marvell's lyric grace (a grace of which Cowley has nothing). It is a spirit of good sense, of common sense ; appealing to the criteria that the coming age will refine into " Reason, Truth and Nature." '[13] This suggests the kind of border line that Cowley occupies and the kind of decline of the Metaphysical school that he represents. The opening repetition: ' Tell me, oh tell . . . ' is typical of him and looks forward to one of his besetting faults, his tendency to simulate ' inspiration.' Mr. Leavis suggests the curious ' instability ' between this bardic note and the tentative definitions of stanzas 8 and 9. Much of the definition is negative, but the positives make clear the direction in which Cowley's poetic talent was moving.

> All ev'ry where, like *Mans*, must be the *Soul*,
> And *Reason* the *Inferior Powers* controul.
>
> In a true piece of *Wit* all things must be,
> Yet all things there *agree*.
> As in the Ark, joyn'd without force and strife,
> All *Creatures* dwelt ; all *Creatures* that had *Life*.
> Or as the *Primitive Forms* of all
> (If we compare great things with small)
> Which without *Discord* or *Confusion* lie
> In that strange *Mirror* of the *Deitie*.

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[12]The long description of ' Wit ' in Davenant's *Preface before Gondibert* also suggests to me a ' Coleridgean ' conception of poetic creation. It applies better to Metaphysical poetry than to Davenant's epic and the work of his successors. Hobbesian descriptions of imagination apply only to Augustan verse and are inadequate to that.

[13]*Revaluation*, Chap. 1.

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The key words are 'Reason,' 'agree,' 'without *Discord* or *Confusion*.'

Cowley is not a Metaphysical poet of the kind defined by Mr. James Smith.[14] Professor Grierson's more generalized description[15] applies to him better. He rarely desires to communicate a more complex thought than can be expressed by means of fanciful imagery. His first description of wit,

> Yonder we saw it plain ; and here 'tis now,
> Like *Spirits* in a *Place*, we know not How

has a certain depth of meaning ; Wit is elusive like the Ghosts, and is also awe-inspiring and can be a presiding influence. But the simple though apt comparison,

> Some things do through our Judgment pass
> As through a *Multiplying Glass*.

is more typical. Coleridge said that he had 'a discursive intellect.' One might say that whereas in Donne and Marvell the imaginative power of the poem is manifest equally in the vividness of the parts and the grandeur of the whole, in Cowley the tone and accent is of most importance, and since the conceits are all on one theme and express one attitude towards it one might describe them as decoration rather than concrete realization. They play a part but Cowley does not demand a very exacting one. The poverty of inspiration behind all this gives one cause to call him decadent ; it also in part accounts, I think, for his contemporary fame. He did what Mr. Spender and Mr. Day Lewis, especially the latter, do to-day. They provide simplified versions of the technique and some of the themes of Mr. Eliot and Hopkins, which those more interested in 'modern poetry' than in poetry prefer to the originals. Cowley was an inestimably greater figure—he lived for one thing in a great century—but the comparison is not entirely unfair. He wrote poetry which was thought to be 'the thing,' in the manner of Dr. Donne, but it was not disturbing or difficult to read. 'Less extravagant, his wit is also less passionate and imaginative. The long wrestle between reason and imagination

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[14]*On Metaphysical Poetry*, in *Determinations*. Edited by F. R. Leavis. [15]Preface to Metaphysical Anthology.

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has ended in the victory of reason, good sense.' Professor Grierson here indicates how Cowley caught the attention of another public, that which was slowly forming the new age They also could find something congenial in his Metaphysical poems, and because Cowley genuinely belonged to both worlds he gradually wrote more and more in the coming manner as the changing environment brought out this other side of his nature. He assimilated the influence of science and the tone polite *and* vulgar of Restoration speech.[16] Hence one reason why he was more thought of than Cleveland and kept his reputation for so long.

Cowley's Metaphysical poems are scattered in all the sections of his collected works and one must risk clumsiness in order to obtain a manageable grouping. His most considerable Metaphysical poem is his elegy *On the Death of Mr. Crashaw*. His achievement is not on a level with, say, *The Second Anniversarie* ; but Cowley nevertheless avoids here the weaknesses of the *Ode. Of Wit*. It is a meditation on the relation of poetry and sainthood, opening with formal eulogy.

> *Poet* and *Saint*! to thee alone are given
> The two most sacred Names in *Earth* and *Heaven*.
> The hard and rarest *Union* which can be
> Next that of *Godhead* and *Humanitie*.
> Long did the *Muses* banisht *Slaves* abide,
> And built vain *Pyramids* to mortal pride ;
> Like *Moses* thou (though Spells and Chasms withstand)
> Hast brought them nobly home back to their *Holy Land*.

The couplets have a Restoration balance but also a peculiar individuality given by their self-contained and separate nature and their confident tone—we shall see this quality in Cowley's rhythms elsewhere. There follows a simple vision of Crashaw in heaven and then a transition to a denunciatory satiric passage on the state of poetry on earth, ending in mocking contempt.

> Still the old *Heathen Gods* in *Numbers* dwell,
> The *Heav'enliest* thing on Earth still keeps up *Hell*.
> . . . . . .

[16] 'He forsook the conversation, but never the language, of the city and the court.' Sprat.

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> Nay, with the worst of Heathen dotage We
> (Vain men!) the *Monster Woman Deifie* ;
> Find *Stars*, and tye our *Fates* there in *Face*,
> And *Paradise* in them by whom we *lost* it, place.
> What different faults corrupt our *Muses* thus?
> *Wanton* as *Girles*, *Wives as old Fabulous*!

As the diction becomes increasingly colloquial, the couplet develops an informality, reinforcing the new sense and feeling ; it is the couplet of Donne or Jonson. Then in similar couplets comes the central conceit:

> Thy spotless *Muse*, like *Mary*, did contain
> The boundless *Godhead* ; she did well disdain
> That her *eternal Verse* employ'd should be
> On a less subject then *Eternitie* ;
> And for a sacred *Mistress* scorn'd to take
> But her whom *God* himself scorn'd not his *Spouse* to make.
> It (in a kind) *her Miracle* did do ;
> A fruitful *Mother* was, and *Virgin* too.

The rhythms of this give it enough weight, I think, for one to say that the image of creation is realized with the full powers of the imagination. It is a fitting description of Crashaw's mysticism.

The beautiful elegiac passage on Crashaw's death at Loretto is rendered also in free couplets and the alexandrine has a fine lilt.

> *Angels* (they say) brought the fam'd *Chappel* there,
> And bore the sacred load in Triumph through the air.
> 'Tis surer much they brought thee there, and *They*.
> And *Thou*, their charge, went *singing* all the way.

Cowley apologises for praising a heretic in yet another manner, appropriately matter of fact and reasonable ; Pope imitated,

> His *Faith*, perhaps in such nice Tenents might[17]
> Be wrong ; his *Life*, I'm sure, was *in the right*.

Then he rises to the grand finale of

---

[17] *Essay on Man*.

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Hail, *Bard Triumphant*! and some care bestow
On *us*, the *Poets Militant* Below!
Oppos'd by our old En'emy, adverse *Chance*,
Attaqu'd by *Envy*, and by *Ignorance*,
Enchain'd by *Beauty*, tortur'd by *Desires*,
Expos'd by *Tyrant-Love* to savage *Beasts* and *Fires*.

The alexandrine rounds off an effect of Restoration grandiose formality rather than Augustan politeness ; Mr. Van Doren thinks it was one of Cowley's chief legacies to Dryden. The ending is a baroque set piece, a sort of emblem in the manner of the Italians, whom Crashaw had first introduced to him:

Thou from low earth in nobler *Flames* didst rise
And like *Elijah*, mount *Alive* the skies.
Elisha-like (but with a wish much less,
More fit thy *Greatness* than my *Littleness*)
Lo here I beg (I whom thow once didst prove
So humble to *Esteem*, so Good to *Love*)
Not that thy Spirit might on me *Doubled*, be,
I ask but *Half* thy mighty *Spirit* for me.
And when my *Muse* soars with so strong a Wing,
'Twill learn of things *Divine*, and first of *Thee* to sing.

Cowley has brought his feelings to order and harmony in a mood of static contemplation. He started the elegy formally and after working with perfect neo-classic *ordonnance* through various moods of simplicity and intimacy he returns to a rigid convention.

Among Cowley's other decidedly Metaphysical verse may be mentioned the Donnean pastiche *Friendship in Absence*, *The Tree of Knowledge*, *Reason*, a minor poetic success and an interesting document of religious ideas and influences,[18] and *Against Hope* which is a characteristic miscellany of images from the law, science, gambling, etc., held together by his pleasant friendly tone. Among his attempts to write in Pindar's ' way and manner of speaking ' *Destinie*, *Life and Fame* and *Life* are the most Metaphysical in flavour. The first stanza of *Destinie* will serve as an example.

[18]Cowley took a lively but never profound interest in contemporary thought ; at all events his poetry never shows a profound interest.

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Strange and *unnatural*! lets stay and see
This *Pageant* of a *Prodigie*.
Lo, of themselves th' enlivened *Chesmen* move,
Lo, the unbred, il-organ'd *Pieces* prove,
As full of *Art*, and *Industrie*,
Of *Courage* and of *Policie*,
As *we ourselves* who think ther's nothing *Wise* but *We*.
Here a proud *Pawn* I, admire
That still advancing higher
At top of all became
Another *Thing* and *Name*.
Here I'm amaz'ed at th'actions of a *Knight*,
That does bold wonders in the fight.
Here I the losing party blame
For those false *Moves* that break the *Game*,
That to their *Grave* the *Bag*, the conquered *Pieces* bring.
And above all, th'*ill Conduct* of the *Mated King*.

Although this is from one of his original Pindariques, Cowley here forgets all about Pindaric sublimity and writes a witty conversational poem in which the long stanza gives scope for elaborate images and the loose rhythms allow a frequent variation of tone ; the exaggeration and repetition are used ironically. In all these odes that I have mentioned one can easily trace a simple underlying argument ; they are not products of a complex or of a profoundly inspired sensibility. The late *Hymn to Light* is a richer and solider affair, but none of its images has more than one layer of meaning. Cowley gives us an awestruck altitude towards the creative power of light and heat in the following elaborate stanza:

Hail active Natures watchful Life and Health!
Her Joy, her Ornament, and Wealth!
Hail to thy Husband Heat, and Thee!
Thou the worlds beauteous Bride, the lusty Bridegroom He!

There are Spenserian memories of the kind that influenced the Restoration:

Night and her ugly Subjects thow doest fright,
And sleep, the lazy Owl of Night ;

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Asham'd and fearful to appear
They skreen their horrid shapes with the black Hemisphere.

The strong moralizing element is also typical of its date and typical of the author's Horatian outlook.

There were four important Metaphysical poets whose lives, as it were, bridge the gap between the early half of the century and the Restoration: Marvell,[19] Crashaw, Vaughan and Cowley. Crashaw and Vaughan are both highly individual poets who were unaffected by the changes in outlook of their age. Crashaw's most typical manner is a rapturous and ecstatic mysticism. Vaughan has a romantic note ; he too allows his emotions free play, but they are of a more normal kind. Neither of them exhibits 'wit' as a rigorously critical or a socially tactful process—it amounts in the main to Hobbes' ' knowing much.' Yet one would not call them decadent, as one would Cowley for his frequent weak use of conceits and his tendency to over-emphasis. However, their work does not lead on the Restoration in any way. Cleveland is both decadent and stands at the end of a real cul-de-sac, virtuosity in words and technique for their own sake. His virtuosity is considerably less than Donne's or Herbert's, who had something difficult to say by means of it, but it is obviously his only interest in writing verse. Except in *On the memory of Mr. Edward King, drown'd in the Irish Seas*, for him the theme is merely a string to thread multifarious beads on ; questions of realization and consistency of imagery are irrelevant. A few lines from *An Hecatomb to his Mistress* will illustrate both his cleverness with words and his helplessness when he attempts to dwell on the actual theme:

Suppose an angel, darting through the air,
Should there encounter a religious prayer
Mounting to Heaven, that Intelligence
Should for a Sunday-suit thy breath condense
Into a body . . .
So can I not define how sweet, how fair,

[19]A comparison of Cowley's translation of Chorus II from Seneca's *Thyestes* at the end of the essay *Of Obscurity* with Marvell's translation of the same poem shows how far Cowley moved away from the true Metaphysical wit.

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Only I say she's not as others are.
For what perfections we to others grant,
It is her sole perfection to want.

Cowley may give us Metaphysical poetry carefully freed from unevenness and varnished over with politeness, but Cleveland's main interest is not ultimately poetic at all, however intense it may be ; one might call it sub-fanciful. The feeling is constantly one of jolly self-satisfaction in the game. There is no need to discuss the work of Benlowes. He had no successors and no predecessors. He is the Burton of seventeenth poetry, with a similar muscular vigour in places and a similar fantasticalness and incoherence.

I now come to the group of Cowley's poems where Donne shares the influence with Jonson and where tone becomes an increasingly important feature: *The Chronicle*, *The Anacreontiques* and *The Mistress*. We find what Sprat[20] calls ' the same unaffected modesty, and natural freedom, and easy vigour, and cheerful passions and innocent mirth, which appeared in all his manners.' The best of these poems are yet another variety of good Caroline society verse, but a comparison of *Anacreontique X* with Lovelace's *The Grasshopper* brings out the new spirit that was appearing in Cowley, what Johnson could find ' amiable to common readers ' and ' showing nothing of the mould of time.' Cowley's poem is a uniformly stylized Epicurean pastoral, freed from all ' grossness.' Lovelace's is a varied personal poem, in places no less artificial than Cowley's but also strongly colloquial. Compare the essentially literary

Happy *Insect*, what can be
In happiness compar'd to Thee?
Fed with nourishment divine
The dewy *Mornings* gentle Wine!
Nature waits upon thee still,
And thy verdant Cup does fill,
'Tis fill'd whereever Thou dost tread,
Nature selfe's thy *Ganimed*

[20] *Life of Cowley*.

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with

> Oh thou that swing'st upon the waving eare
> Of some well-filled Oaten Beard,
> Drunke ev'ry night with a Delicious teare
> Dropt thee from Heav'n, where th'art reard,

which is a more faithfully observed description in subtler rhythm, ending on a gentler note than anything in Cowley's poem. The classical allusions are blended with simple speech idioms, as in

> But, ah, the Sickle! Golden Eares are cropt ;
> *Ceres* and *Bacchus* bid good night . . .

Lovelace is the aristocrat, at any rate the cavalier, and his good manners include easily a gaiety and an intimacy, a simplicity and a robustness. Although he never took a real place in Charles II's London, one can say that by comparison with Lovelace, Cowley is a gentleman in the Restoration sense ; he combines, as Sprat says, the courtier and the scholar, his wit maintains a decorum, he is more concerned to classicize English than to anglicize the classics which had been Jonson's own aim. Not much need be added to make up a brief critique of *The Mistress*. Cowley's Preface supports the supposition that he composed the sequence as a poetical amusement during his tedious exile in Paris as secretary to Lord Jermyn. He writes with fair success in the manners of Donne,[21] of Waller (there is a reference to Sacharissa) and of Suckling—he is usually on the Restoration side of Cavalier in tone—and his lyrics have as much interest as is possible in verse which borrows almost every feature from conventional sources ; my earlier discussion of his popularity accounts for their acceptance as a *ars amandi* of the age. He fails when he attempts to be ' serious ' or to be ' pindaric.' *The Rich Rival, Discretion* and *The Waiting-Maid,* and also *The Chronicle* seem to me among the most individual work *and* the most suggestive of how the poetic tradition was developing. I will quote from *The Chronicle,* which ' airy frolic of genius ' Johnson particularly admired, although it doesn't actually appear in *The Mistress.*

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[21]Mr. John Sparrow has made a list of borrowings in his preface to his *The Mistress with Other Select Poems of Abraham Cowley.*

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10

Gentle *Henriette* than
And a third *Mary* next began
Then *Jone*, and *Jane*, and *Audria*,
And then a pretty *Thomasine*,
And then another *Katherine*,
And then a *long Et coetera*.

11

But should I now to you relate,
The strength and riches of their *state*,
The *Powder*, *Patches*, and the *Pins*,
The *Ribbans*, *Jewels*, and the *Rings*,
The *Lace*, the *Paint*, and *warlike things*,
That make up all their *Magazins*:

12

If I should tell the politic Arts
To take and keep mens hearts,
The Letters, Embassies, and Spies,
The Frowns, and Smiles, and Flatteries,
The Quarrels, Tears, and Perjuries,
Numberless, *Nameless Mysteries*!

13

And all the *Little Lime-Twigs* laid
By *Matchavel* the *Waiting-Maid* ;
I more voluminous should grow
(Chiefly if I like them should tell
All change of *Weathers* that befell)
Then *Holinshed* or *Stow*.

14

But I will briefer with them be,
Since few of them were long with Me
An higher and a nobler strain
My present *Emperess* does claim,
Heleonora, First o' th' Name ;
Whom *God grant long to reign*!

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There is a suggestion of Suckling (*Ballad upon a Wedding*) and also a foretaste of Prior. A trace of Cowley the scholar gives body to the gaiety of Cowley the courtier.

A similar merging of the Metaphysical Cavalier verse into the Restoration modes is observable in the work of Waller, Mrs. Philips, Flatman and Butler. They all make clear the continuity of the poetic tradition. Mrs. Philips ' parodies ' Donne's compass image in *Friendship in Emblem*, and Thomas Flatman, a better poet than she, gives us the Cavalier manner diluted and formalized in

> Be not proud, imperious Dame,
> Your charms are transitory things,
> May melt, while you at Heaven aim,
> Like *Icarus's* Waxen Wings ;
> And you a part in his misfortunes bear,
> Drown'd in a briny Ocean of despair,

which might come from *The Mistress*. *A Doomsday Thought* seems to be the product of an essentially Metaphysical wit, for example:

> Go to the dull churchyard and see
> Those hillocks of mortality,
> Where proudest Man is only found
> By a small swelling in the ground.
> What crowds of carcases are made
> Slaves to the pick-axe and the spade!
> Dig but a foot, or two, to make
> A cold bed, for thy dead friend's sake,
> 'Tis odds but in that scantling room
> Thou robb'st another of his tomb,
> Or in thy delving smites upon
> A shinbone or a cranion.

But the poet ' knows well ' how to make ' all things there agree.' Flatman does here, I think, in the main seriously, what Butler does in the main farcically and on a big scale: namely effects a kind of revitalization of the Metaphysical tradition by deliberately eschewing the spirit which he does not feel, and using the mere style to express his own rationalized sensibility. Butler describes his Knight as a theologian, who was

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Profound in all the Nominal
And real ways beyond them all ;
And with delicate a Hand,
Could twist as tough a Rope of Sand,
And weave fine Cobwebs, fit for Skull
That's empty when the Moon is full ;
Such as take Lodgings in a Head
That's to be let unfurnished.

This passage is a predecessor to Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*, as the Flatman is of the last stanza of the Anne Killigrew Ode. Cowley was imitated by Dryden and Rochester.

Mrs. Philips was also ' The Matchless Orinda,' Flatman an F.R.S., and Butler the favourite reading of Charles II and a best-seller. They and Cowley carried the Metaphysical manner forward from the later Cavaliers and naturalized it in the Restoration period. That Cowley was peculiarly qualified for this task can be seen in such early poems as *The Motto, On the Death of Mr. William Hervey, In Imitation of Martial's Epigram, Si tecum mihi chare Martialis*, etc., *The Wish* and various occasional poems especially those on Lord Falkland and Mr. Jordan. These poems exemplify most completely the social spirit of the *Ode. Of Wit.* They express a part only of his temperament at that period of his life, but it came to be the predominant one. Sprat says that it was ' remarkable, that a man who was so constant and fixed in the moral ideas of his mind, should yet be so changeable in his intellectual ' ; these poems crystallized that fixed element ; the minor eighteenth century poets like Gray and Cowper found them ' natural and pleasing ' (Bishop Hurd).[22] The poem on Hervey is more obviously personal than previous seventeenth century elegies. In the first stanza Cowley evokes the appropriate mood by direct presentation of a scene:

It was a dismal, and a fearful night,
Scarce could the Morn drive on th'unwilling Light,

[22]Mr. Leavis accounts for the popularity of the Hervey elegy in detail in *Revaluation*, Chap. 1. One may add that Gray imitated ' Large was his Soul . . . ' in ' Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ' in the Elegy.

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When *Sleep, Deaths Image*, left my troubled breast,
By something *liker Death* possest,
My eyes with Tears did uncommanded flow,
And on my Soul hung the dull weight
Of some *Intolerable Fate.*
What Bell was that? Ah me! Too much I know.

He uses his stanza to the full, sinking after a slightly heightened description to the speaking voice of the grief-stricken man. In the next seven stanzas he recovers his self-composure and outlines his life at Cambridge with Hervey in the idiom and tone of courteous conversation, occasionally flavoured with Spenserian memories. Then comes

Had I a wreath of *Bays* about my brow,
I should contemn that flourishing honor now,
Condemn in to the *Fire*, and joy to hear
It rage and crackle there.
Instead of *Bays*, crown with sad *Cypress* me ;
Cypress which *Tombs* does beautifie ;
Not *Phoebus* griev'd so much as I
For him, who first was made that mournful *Tree.*

By a formal figure, Cowley deliberately breaks away from his personal grief and generalizes it. Consolation creeps in with the idea of a beautiful tomb, and from now on the increasing panegyric carries Hervey away to heaven. The diction, however, continues to be very close to that of prose and the rhapsodic note at the end is subdued. Stanza 13 is noteworthy:

So strong a *Wit* did *Nature* in him frame,
As all things but his *Judgment* overcame ;
His *Judgment* like the heav'nly *Moon* did show,
Temp'ring that mighty *Sea* below.
Oh had he liv'd in *Learnings World*, what bound
Would have been able to controul
His over-powering Soul?
We' have lost in him *Arts* that not yet are *found.*

The sense and feeling look forward to Dryden's *Mr. Oldham*, though Cowley has not Dryden's high formal tone ; his is quieter and

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more retiring. The elegy is a triumph of the poetry of simple sensibility.

In Imitation of Martials Epigram is the most satisfying early expression of Cowley's Horatianism; the admirably balanced opening and closing couplets belong with the best things in the *Essays in Verse and Prose* and again make one look beyond:

> If, dearest *Friend*, it my good Fate might be
> T'enjoy at once a *quiet Life* and ***Thee*** ;
> If we for *Happiness* could *leisure* find,
> And *wandring Time* into a *Method* bind
> We should not sure the *Great Mens* favour need,
> Nor on long *Hopes*, the *Courts thin Diet*, feed . . .
> . . . . . .
> A few *Companions*, which ourselves should chuse,
> A *Gentle Mistress*, and a *Gentler Muse*.
> Such, dearest Friend, such without doubt should be
> Our *Place*, our *Business*, and our *Companie*.
> Now to *Himself*, alas, does neither *Live*.
> But sees good *Suns*, of which we are to give
> A strict *account*, set and march thick away ;
> *Knows a man how to Live, and does he stay?*

The Motto provides an opportunity to sum up. Inspired by literary ambition, his most abiding interest, Cowley speaks out at his most confident:

> What shall I do to be for ever known,
> And make the *Age to come* my own?

His bardic tendency, which was often to run astray, is here canalized into a steady oratorical progression (*cf.* a similar success in odes such as *Brutus*, *Mr. Hobs*, *The Royal Society*, *Upon the Death of the Earl of Balcarres*, *The Complaint*):

> Yet I must on ; what sound is't strikes mine ear?
> Sure I *Fames Trumpet* hear.
> It sounds like the *last Trumpet* ; for it can
> Raise up the *bur'ied Man*.
> Unpast *Alpes* stop me, but I'll cut through all,
> And march, the *Muses Hannibal*.

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Hence all the *flattering vanities*, that lay
Nets of Roses in the way . . .

The decasyllabic line asks a rapid question or makes a tentative assertion, which is capped by the slow deliberate octosyllabic where one emphasizes every word.

Come my best *Friends*, my *Books*, and lead me on . . .

followed by invocations of Aristotle, Cicero and Virgil, again shows his critical pre-occupations. Finally he binds his couplets together to form a conclusive finish and drops to a more modest tone ; the security of his presiding genii and the difficulty of emulating them is deeply realized in image and rhythm:

But you have climb'd the *Mountains* top, there sit
On the calm flour'ishing head of it,
And whilst with wearied steps we upward go
See *Us*, and *Clouds* below.

Cowley composed this neo-classic manifesto presumably after *The Mistress*. It represents a concentration of all his powers, deep personal feeling as a poet and scholar, a rich fancy and his knowledge of ' all the variety and power of poetical numbers ' (Sprat), and, fusing these together, the full force of his literary judgment and moral sensibility. He seems to have appreciated his own achievement, seeing that he finally published the poem at the beginning of his collected works. Unfortunately he disappoints the expectations aroused by it, and would do even if it prefaced the ' pindariques ' or later verse. As it is, it belongs to the small group of his successes, and also with those of his poems which place him with Waller, Denham and Davenant as a precursor of the Augustan age.

GEOFFREY WALTON.

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CORRESPONDENCE

LITERARY CRITICISM AND PHILOSOPHY

THE following passages are extracted from a letter in which Dr. Wellek comments on the ' Reply ' by F. R. Leavis that appeared in *Scrutiny* for June. The letter was not written for publication, but Dr. Wellek permits us to print these extracts:

I think, that you have misunderstood some of my arguments and exaggerated the opposition on specific points. As to the first question, of norms, I think you misinterpret my view when you say that I would like to have the critic apply the norm ' from outside ' (p. 61). In my paper on the *Theory of Literary History* a long argument is conducted precisely against the absolutism of those who would like to superimpose value to structure and I refer to the logical circle in the fact that the historical process (and this applies also to the individual poem) has to be judged by value, while the scale of value is itself derived from history (or from the individual poem). You are too afraid of the word ' norm,' but even if you ask ' How relatively *important* and valuable does it seem?' (p. 61) you are, after all, implying a norm. Your criticism of Bateson which I have quoted in my paper on Literary History was welcomed by me precisely because you stress the implicitness of value-judgments in the smallest concrete instance. And now you seem to argue against this. Actually I think there is no disagreement whatever on this point between us. As to the enumeration of your criteria which you consider clumsy and inadequate, they are, of course, absolutely literal quotations from your book, though, I admit, torn out of their context. But to keep their context would have meant transcribing your book.[1] It is clear from your reply that ' vitality,' ' Life,' etc., seems your highest value, a concept

[1] I must thank Dr. Wellek for making my point in so flattering a way.—F.R.L.

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which obviously opens all sorts of difficult questions (*cf.* the '*devitalising*' effect on p. 63).

As to the remarks on the romantic poets I think you have somewhat misunderstood my main argument. I do not disagree with your point of view on these poets (in general) and I realize the difference between the poet and the philosopher quite well. I do not want *e.g.* to 'assimilate' Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley even into a common philosophy (though they have certain approaches in common). My point was that you were using in your literary criticism sometimes arguments directed against the philosophical value of the thought implied. You were, to put it crudely, using the philosophical stick to beat the romantic boy. So I, deliberately confining myself to these arguments on the philosophy of these poets, tried to show that it—*i.e.* the philosophy—is defensible and coherent. I wanted to take away or to break the philosophical stick but this, of course, did not mean that I do not agree with your literary criticism as such. I wanted only to suggest that some of your arguments are invalid (just because they are merely directed against the soundness of the *thought*).

* * *

On the whole, I think then you make me out to be a complete rationalist though I assume this rôle only for precise purposes where I think this rationalism justified. After all, right as you are in insisting on what you call 'complete response' as an indispensable preliminary to criticism, it is only a preliminary and the critical problem begins with the translation into language which cannot be other than conceptual, at least to a very high degree. Here the problem of the critic of poetry is identical with the problem, say, of the critic of music. A 'sensibility' for music is presupposed and absolutely necessary, but the main difficulty is the expression and formulation of these 'responses' in language. And the very same problem is actually present to the philosopher as well who has to formulate his response to the universe of things just as much as the art critic to poetry, painting, music, etc.

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CHRISTOPHER DAWSON AND 'ARENA'

THE April, 1937, issue of *Arena* contains a criticism of the article on Christopher Dawson which I contributed to the March issue of *Scrutiny*. It is impossible, within the limits of a brief communication, to reply to all the strictures made by *Arena*, but since some of them are based on misunderstandings of what I said in my article, I should like to add a few comments.

Arena denies my statement that 'Christianity is a blend of two contradictory traditions.' In my opinion Christianity has inherited two different ethical systems—one humanistic, the other ascetic. According to the first what is natural is good, evil being a deviation from nature; according to the second what is natural is bad. The two systems appear side by side, juxtaposed but not harmonized, in the philosophy of St. Thomas. According to St. Thomas human beings need grace for two different reasons; firstly, in order that they may achieve natural good, such good as Adam was capable of in paradise; secondly, in order that they may achieve supernatural good. To achieve natural good means to be a perfect human being, a creature consisting of a mind and a body, living in society, midway between the angels and the animals; to achieve supernatural good means to retire from the world, to mortify the flesh, and to cultivate visions and ecstasies. St. Thomas, elucidating his Aristotelian conception of natural good, declares, for example, that the pleasure derived from the sexual relationship, is good; but for St. Augustine, who judged it from the standpoint of supernatural good, it was an evil. As a proof of St. Thomas's failure to harmonize the two traditions I might remind *Arena* that shortly after his death he was accused of heresy; the reason was that by adopting the Aristotelian conception that the soul was the form of the body and that the body was the principle of individuation, his philosophy, in so far as it was faithful to the Aristotelian tradition, virtually implied that man did not have an individual soul which could survive the death of the body. I regard the humanistic element in Christianity as responsible for its most valuable cultural achievements. *Arena* cites the beauty of the carvings at Chartres. *Arena* should remember that there was also another tradition in mediæval Christianity, represented

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for example by the early Cistercians, which condemned the artistry of the cathedrals.

According to *Arena* Catholicism deprived of its supernatural elements becomes liberalism, and since liberalism is bankrupt we must return to Catholic Christianity. This is not true. Subtract the otherworldly elements from Catholicism, and what is left is not only—shall we say?—Jeremy Bentham, but also the humanistic ethics of Aristotle. Ethically, liberalism is a negative creed ; but if we want positive values, it is not necessary to go back to St. Augustine.

Arena declares that without belief in a supernatural religion culture decays. Belief in a supernatural religion is a vague phrase which seems to include two different things. It means firstly, the adoption of a coherent interpretation of the universe which may be based on reason but which goes beyond scientific evidence ; secondly, the belief that man's true home is in another world. The first is probably an essential element in a healthy society ; the second seems to me both a symptom and a cause of social decline. I do not criticize Dawson for believing in God ; the Catholic proofs of the existence of God are, as *Arena* says, rational. I criticize him for maintaining that human beings must remain in contact with supernatural forces. I do not see what rational proof there can be that such a thing is possible, and as for the notion that it is essential to cultural vitality, I would reply that such a belief is characteristic of cultures which are either undeveloped (like that of the Pueblo Indians) or retrogressive (like imperial Rome). Since, moreover, many of the examples which Dawson cites are from non-Christian societies, they can scarcely be used as evidence for the truth of Christianity. *Arena* complains that I evade discussion of any of the specific arguments for the truth of Christianity ; but since Dawson, in his writings, scarcely discusses them, it would be irrelevant for me to do so. Dawson himself believes that Christianity is true ; but the main argument of his writings is merely that a religion is culturally necessary. As for *Arena's* assertion that Catholicism is ' the universal religion,' it is of course not true, except as a statement of an aspiration which Catholicism shares with half a dozen other religions.

Arena accuses me of wishing to dissociate philosophy from behaviour and, apparently, of implying that one should ' confine

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oneself to practical activity without any further view beyond it.' I do not say that philosophy and behaviour ought to be dissociated, but I believe that in actuality they very frequently are so. Human beings are apt to profess one philosophy and to act in terms of another. At the present day the parties of the left may often profess materialism, but their behaviour is, in reality, guided by values and ideals which appear to me to be derived from the Christian tradition ; on the other hand *Arena's* hero, General Franco, and his ally, the conqueror of Ethiopia, claim to be protectors of the Church, but I am unable to discover any traces of Christianity in their behaviour. And according to an authority which I suppose *Arena* will acknowledge, men are to be known not by their words but by their fruits.

An otherworldly religion can only be indifferent to political programmes. But insofar as Catholicism is faithful to a more humanistic tradition, then it advocates, through Pope Pius, peace, trade unionism, social welfare and government ownership of key industries—a programme which is similar to that of Social-democracy and which in such countries as the United States, where the Church has not acquired important vested interests, has made it a generally liberal force in politics. If a part of the Spanish Church preferred General Franco to the (*not* Communist) government of the Popular Front, it was partly because it was influenced by its property interests. *Arena* denies the possibility of such a thing. I can only refer to the history of Spain before 1931 or of Mexico before the Laws of Reform of 1859—countries in which the Church was intellectually dominant, in which it owned enormous properties, in which the majority of the population lived in extreme poverty, and in which attempts at social reform were blocked by a combination of the bishops, the generals and the landowners. This may be a case of what *Arena* calls ' individual Catholics ' failing ' to carry out the Church's programme.' It seems to me to illustrate my distinction between Catholicism as a body of beliefs and ideals and the Catholic Church as human institution.

H. B. PARKES.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

MASS-OBSERVATION, by Charles Madge and Tom Harrisson, with a Foreword by Professor Julian Huxley (Muller, 1937, 1/-).

At present it is quite impossible to assess the value of the work the authors of this pamphlet propose to do ; the pamphlet is to their undertaking what a dust-wrapper blurb is to a book. And this defines the scope of any comments that can be made at this stage.

It may be fair to point out even now that the scheme of getting untrained voluntary observers to make reports on their every-day experience is not as new or revolutionary as readers of the pamphlet might gather. Day-to-day diaries of leisure pursuits (such as Lundberg used) ; reports on sexual interests and experiences (*e.g.*, Davies' work) ; reports from parents, head-masters and other teachers collated as a preliminary to vocational guidance (as in the techniques of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology) ; innumerable reports on budgets and expenditure gathered in sociological inquiries ; occasional descriptions in psychological journals by untrained observers of social events (*e.g.*, an American bank cashier's account of a panic run on his bank, an Anglo-Indian's account of his child's polylingual habits)—these come to mind at once as instances of the use made by psychologists of untrained observers. The authors of the pamphlet seem to overlook the fact that social psychologists have always had to gather their data from untrained observers, and that a considerable part of their effort has been directed to discovering the safest and most fruitful methods of eliciting information (consider the work, constructive and critical, which has been done on rating scales, interviewing, the form of questions, attitude scales, etc.).

The question is whether the method of Mass-Observation is a reliable and reasonably economical way of gathering information. Much that will be of great interest is bound to emerge. But the value of the work will depend on the questions that the investigators have in mind and the direction they give to their observers' attention. (The notion, which seems to lurk at one or two points in the pamphlet, that you can accumulate facts *in vacuo* without

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guiding ideas represents an elementary fallacy in scientific method).

The chief difference between Mass-Observation and more familiar inquiries in psychology and sociology lies in the greater sense it gives of co-operative undertaking by the observers and their directors, and the resulting tendency for the observers' part in it to give them extra interest in the features of their daily life that they are reporting on. 'It stimulates and vivifies the observers,' as Professor Julian Huxley puts it in his foreword. And if it has this missionary effect on a wide scale that will be so much to the good. Here again, how much of the potential value of the scheme is realized will depend on the value of the investigators' critical standpoint. And this must be judged by the standards of culture ; it cannot be affirmed by the 'science' that Mr. Harrisson seems to put his trust in.

But until the authors give more detail of their intentions and methods and the results that have been obtained nothing more can be said, and the reader is left to echo Professor Julian Huxley's words, which so admirably combine affability with prudence: 'I commend this pamphlet to the attention of the intelligent public, and hope that out of it big things will grow.'

D.W.H.

'THE MARXIAN ANALYSIS'

THE MIND IN CHAINS. Edited by C. Day Lewis (Muller, 5/-).
EDUCATION, CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST, by Beryl Pring (Methuen, 7/6).

> 'The contributors to this volume—who are neither crazy visionaries nor disgruntled cranks, but ordinary men and women eminent in their own branches of knowledge—have decided on the latter alternative. Something is preventing us from giving our best to humanity, they say ; let us find out what that something is and do our best to remove it.'

—Perhaps, one is led to conjecture from the tone and style of this, it is the Book Society Limited that is preventing Mr. Day Lewis himself from giving us at least something better (he belongs, we recall, to the Selection Committee). Actually, however, practically all his flock of contributors share his trick of relying

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on the Soviet Union to fill the emptiness left in their essays by the absence of anything convincingly positive:

> ' *The Mind in Chains* could never have been written were it not for the widespread belief of intellectual workers that the mind is really in chains today, that these chains have been forged by a dying social system, that they can and must be broken—and in the Soviet Union have been broken . . . '

—That is Mr. Day Lewis ; and indeed one has heard that in Russian letters to-day the Walpoles and Priestleys have come fully into their own, and Book Society conditions prevail unchallenged. So that when he read in Mr. Edward Upward's essay that

> ' in Russia already writers are better off than anywhere else in the world '

Mr. Lewis wasn't moved, as Editor, to ask ' Which?' Mr. Alistair Browne, as clinical psychologist, writes:

> ' Let us strike off the chains and see what [man] really is . . . There can be little doubt that the direct revolutionary approach has already proved itself in the one country where the experiment has been tried . . . '

Mr. Edgell Rickword writes:

> ' In the new civilization of the Soviet Union " government by the people for the people," that ghost which haunts the capitalist democracies with the reminder of their youthful promises, becomes a living reality based on the right of all to work and to leisure.'

And so on.

Well, we all see that something is wrong with the world to-day, and we all want, as Mr. Day Lewis says, to ' find out what that something is and do our best to remove it.' But the effect of all this reference to Russia can, to-day, only be to confirm our conviction that Marxism is not a sufficient guide. It is when inquiry is made into its provision for the humane values, for a directing and controlling humanity in social and political change, that the inadequacy of theoretical Marxism is especially apparent—and especially to literary intellectuals. So it is not surprising that Mr. Edward Upward's attempts to make a Marxist theory of culture

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convincing by blurring its outlines should have been singled out for applause. It is a mistake, he says, to suppose that Marxists hold

> ' that literary " values " are a *bourgeois* myth, and that books should be classed not as " good " or " bad," but as belonging to and reflecting the social and economic conditions of this or that period in history.'

This must have surprised at least one of his fellow-contributors, Mr. J. D. Bernal (unless he has—like so many Marxists—changed his mind on this point). For it is not so very long since Mr. Bernal appeared to hold—my evidence is conversation with him—precisely the position that Mr. Upward disowns (and Cambridge communists in general used to jeer at the suggestion that one could seriously discuss, with reference to the history of the fiction-market, an alleged decay of standards—a cultural decline).

What Mr. Upward's own position is it is impossible to say ; I have seldom read a more muddled piece of writing. But the intention is plain enough: it is to establish that there can be a specifically Marxist criticism that is at the same time intelligent and disinterested literary criticism and not the Marxist ' criticism ' we are all familiar with. By way of illustration he tells us that D. H. Lawrence, though he

> ' was unquestionably aware of and tried to describe the outside forces that were undermining the bourgeois society into which he had made his way . . . saw those forces mainly from a *bourgeois* view-point, as destroyers to be combated ; consequently he misrepresented reality . . . '

Lawrence, like Proust and Joyce, ' shared the life of a social class which has passed its prime . . . ' Mr. Upward himself, a biographical note informs us, was ' Educated at Repton and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Became a schoolmaster ' (in an Elementary—or perhaps County?—School?).

The jibe is invited ; but I don't offer it merely as a jibe. That the middle and Public School classes should produce so much Marxist enthusiasm, thus calling attention to aspects of human nature that Marxism tends to slight, is an important fact. More important than the Marxist enthusiasm is the element of disinterested humanity that is represented by education in its accepted and

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actual nature—even as it is in a capitalist country. The peculiarly difficult and responsible position of the teacher is discussed by Mr. Rex Warner, though he is too much occupied with the Marxian generalities to get much said.

Miss Pring devotes her book to insisting on the capitalist bias in education. She admits, in a puzzled and reluctant way, that ' capitalist education ' is not all capitalist bias. And she remarks ruefully that

> ' It is one of the problems of the socialist thesis to reconcile the economic theory of class-war with the common decency latent in most individuals of all classes ; it is probably true to say that capitalism gives fewer natural opportunities for its display than socialism.'

(—Is it socialism that obtains in Russia?). She might in fairness have said that this common decency is apt to be more than latent in societies where there has been a long experience of ' bourgeois ' security. It is because of what is recognized in Miss Pring's admissions that we can work with some hope for a better social order and a finer civilization. She, however, explicitly refuses to consider the problem of the transition to the new order, and so is able to achieve a familiar kind of superiority. She says of *Culture and Environment*:

> ' Many illuminating indictments of this state of advertisement will be found in *Culture and Environment* by Messrs. Leavis and Thompson, though it is difficult to understand how the authors can seriously imagine that such an environment can be successfully counterbalanced by a few enlightened teachers of literature in the capitalist schools.'

It is indeed. However, Miss Pring, who has written the book that really makes a difference, admits to having found some illumination in the other little book, and that is perhaps something the authors may modestly count as achievement.

Mr. Edgell Rickword's contribution to *The Mind in Chains* is the only one to show any distinction of mind. But it's a mind, we have regretfully to remark, hampered by its voluntary Marxism more apparently than by any other impediments.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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THE ARTS IN TOTALITARIAN RUSSIA

THE SEVEN SOVIET ARTS, by Kurt London (Faber and Faber, 15/-).

This is a depressing book, and I do not see how anyone but an invincible optimist could find it otherwise. Dr. London's general hopes are all but negatived at every point by his exposition of particular facts and by his comments thereon. He himself seems to be a typical representative of the educated classes who can no longer live in Germany. He has no political bias and he attempts to give a disinterested survey of as many facts about the position of the arts in Russia as he could collect in a few months' stay as a privileged guest, and to comment on achievements up to date. He does not however pretend to be more than a journalist and apologizes that, for instance, he does not analyse systematically the work of the contemporary Russian novelists whom he discusses. Actually one has the impression that his critical methods in all the arts would be disablingly academic. He might be described as a liberal-minded don with a ' Teutonic ' range of interests, who is still diffident about mentioning the connections between art and economics, or the possibility of propaganda being of artistic value. His writing is often distressingly vague and slapdash, though here his translator may have served him badly.

The author's limitations are obvious from the first few pages, and in spite of them one can learn much from the book. It should, in fact, be read by everyone interested in any way in the future of civilization. His conclusions correspond closely, except in their greater optimism, to those of M. Gide, and he provides the documentation which *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.* lacks. The tale told in every chapter is similar: unbounded enthusiasm for art and letters, ideal material conditions, emotional and intellectual stultification, meagre and mediocre results. I don not think one can conceive of a more damning indictment of the cultural life of a country, let alone one which is just settling down to enjoy the results of such a reorganization of the bases of life as the Five Year Plans, than that provided by the examples of the visual

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arts illustrated in this book. The pictures range from the level of a recruiting poster to that of the average work of a provincial arts school. There is some sculpture on the Expressionist side of Fourth Century Greek. *Pravda* has a fairly good modern building, but Moscow is also having a debased revision of the Dorchester and lots of Corner House Classical in the Underground and on the new American Embassy. Novo-Sibirsk is to have an Albert Hall. Thus 'Socialist Realism' succeeds the decidedly freak 'constructivist' creations of earlier days. *Plus ça change* . . . as far as any kind of logical development, or dependence on the economic environment goes—except that there's more money about now than there was. The slogan 'Socialist Realism' is supposed to have originated at a meeting which a group of writers had with Stalin two or three years ago. Since then critics and bureaucrats (interchangeable terms) have been trying to define this mystic phrase of Our Ford (*Brave New World*). Dr. London suggests that it means in practice 'romantic heroics,' and one gathers as much from his descriptions of the novels of Sholokov and the operas of Dzerzhinsky; another term would be 'uplift.' Most of the Soviet poets seem to have committed suicide. The ballet is moribund. Productions are marvellous but few new plays are available. No sound films have been made that can be compared to the famous silent ones.

The greater part of the book describes the cause of all this. Artists of every kind in the U.S.S.R. are privileged beings. By becoming members of the appropriate association they can assure themselves of a living salary, in return for putting their work at the disposal of the association. Everything is arranged in the most flexible manner and they enjoy to the full the financial benefits of popularity. The associations organize schools of art, music and writing, and provide advice and facilities of all kinds for any one who asks for them. Costs seem not to be considered. Interest in and enthusiasm for the arts seems to be universal in all sections of the public. All this is admirable. No one is going to suggest that poverty and hardship are a major source of inspiration. On the other hand the Soviet Government seem to think that petty political supervision is. The Central Art Committee controls the associations and the Government the C.A.C. No one has defined Socialist Realism, but work in all the arts must deal with the lives

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of individual Soviet citizens, must be strictly proper, must be optimistic, must show an individual style but must not reflect the author's personal shades of opinion, and finally must be immediately intelligible to an untrained public headed by the 'Leader of the Peoples.' Any other work, for example Shostakovitch's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, or a mild imitation of Chirico by Nikritin, is banned. Lenin was a philistine but let art alone; Trotsky realized that 'Art has its own laws' and that the party was not competent to legislate for it. Stalin, on the other hand, knows that 'this modern art' is vicious, and sees to it that a simple totalitarian standard is applied. The period of undergraduate exhibitionism has been followed by a second-rate donnish-cum-Book Society-cum-Royal Academy conservatism. One could go on fulminating indefinitely. In brief, the artist in any sphere has not, and has no hope at present of obtaining, a sensibly educated public or an alert, disinterested or even competent, criticism—the most antiquated and ham-handed 'form and content' methods prevail, the 'classics' are sacred. *As an artist*, the painter or poet is much better off in Western Europe. One remains, like Dr. London, astounded at the opportunities wasted, the sheer cultural obscurantism and irresponsibility of the political leaders. Of course one never knows when a quick-change ukase may go forth from the Kremlin, but there is no arrogance greater than that of the half-educated, whether ruler or subject. In the meanwhile Hitler and Stalin, Goering and Molotov, Goebbels and Kalinin, would, despite their political differences, be quite happy together in a box at the opera. What a chance for a State Visit!

GEOFFREY WALTON.

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THE MODERN MIND

THE MODERN MIND, by Michael Roberts (Faber and Faber, 8/6).

The first sentence of this book proposes an interesting thesis for examination. ' This is a study of some changes in the use of the English language ; in particular, it traces the influence of material science on common speech, and it shows in turn the effects of these changes on our attitude to religion, poetry and science itself.' Our attention is attracted ; for the difficulties and dangers are enough to inspire at least an ingenious argument, and the subject is connected with much that is in the minds of the not negligible body of people to whom the principles and products of science are by no means the last word in human wisdom. But, alas, the reader is quickly disappointed, for three good reasons. First, the ' changes in the use of the English language ' are studied very sketchily ; there is nothing profound in the treatment. Secondly, the diagnosis of those changes is far from convincing ; their attribution to the influence of ' material science ' is supported by nothing very compelling by way of argument or evidence. And thirdly, almost from the first page the author shows an alarming and disconcerting tendency to wander from his thesis ; it is one of the most undisciplined philosophical books it has been my fortune to read. It may seem ungracious to consider first the disappointment that the book arouses, but since it is great and comes, not from expecting something which is not promised, but from the author's own treatment of his own subject, it tends to overshadow the incidental acuteness and interest of much of what he has to say.

' Between 1640 and 1680, the language became a more exact logical instrument, the change was the result of conscious and deliberate effort.' ' . . . . people became more literal-minded, seeing in words only one unique unemotive reference.' ' . . . our capacity to hear and understand the overtone of meaning has slowly but continuously declined.' ' . . . that which cannot be said in the language of mechanics is thought to be false.' In short, during the last three centuries or so the English people (and perhaps others) have suffered a loss of poetic sensibility similar to that described

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in the famous passage in Darwin's *Autobiography*—' an atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which higher tastes depend ' ; poetry, and religion whose language is poetic, have lost at the expense of a logical and matter-of-fact attitude of mind and use of language. This is ' the modern mind ' in Mr. Roberts' diagnosis, and no doubt there is truth as well as exaggeration in the view ; and only those who are intellectually callous or have to thank their education for a perverted sense of what is valuable can regard the situation as satisfactory. I think the case is overstated, but there is enough truth in it to make it worth while to examine.

But Mr. Roberts goes further. He attributes this decline in sensibility to the fact that the English language as well as the English mind during those three centuries got into the hands of the scientists, who, for their own purposes, manufactured not only a kind of ' basic ' language, but a language which, because it was merely basic, was debased. And this language, and the mentality which goes with it (defined here as ' materialistic '), has, by the operation of a kind of Gresham's law, driven out the genuine poetic language. Sense has destroyed sensibility, we are the inheritors of a bankrupt language, and it is science which is to blame. Here too, no doubt, there is truth, but also gross exaggeration. That the scientific writers alone are to blame is certainly doubtful, and the view would have to be supported by some much more profound analysis than is given us here if it were to be made convincing. On the face of it, it would appear difficult, if not impossible, to prove that this one element in the history of these three centuries is responsible for this alleged decline in language ; and to set about such a proof argues a lack of historical sense. Unless we are to make ' science ' responsible for all the anti-religious forces of modern civilization, the view cannot be maintained; and we can make it responsible only by an exaggerated view of its influence. No doubt science, and the kind of language it requires for its purposes, has influenced our use of and sensibility to language, but to ask us to believe that science alone is responsible for the alleged ' literal-mindedness ' of the modern world is asking, not only too much, but also more than the evidence produced goes to show. Very little attempt is made to study systematically the result of scientific interests upon the English language and literature ; and the historical examination of English style and

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diction, which a proper exposition of Mr. Roberts' thesis would suggest, is altogether to seek.

The third ground of my disappointment in this book is that again and again, just when we seemed to be about to follow up some promising and relevant line of argument, we are headed off to pursue something, in itself often interesting, but only vaguely connected with the matter in hand. And this lack of discipline makes the book unsatisfactory both as history and as analysis ; it detracts from the value of Mr. Roberts' undoubted learning, and it has the effect of suggesting a much less acute mind than some of his observations show him to possess.

But if this book as a whole is disappointing, and if it shows a certain amateurishness in its treatment of philosophical ideas, some of its chapters, and many incidental passages, contain matter for thought, admirably presented. Chapter V, for example, on Reason and Imagination in the Eighteenth Century, traces the history of the ' gradual restriction of the concept of reason ' during the century. A large part of the book is taken up with scattered discussions of the relations of science and religion, and many of the views seem to me worth stating—indeed, some of them are worth more attention than they get, for Mr. Roberts sees clearly enough that the relationship of science and religion is not one of direct antagonism (the one never denies what the other asserts), but he never gets as far as a comprehensive view of the relationship. What he gives us tends always to degenerate from an analysis of a relation to a defence of one side against the other. And his view that the peculiar danger of the modern mind is to conceive religion in terms of science, to ' turn a personal God into a celestial mechanic ' is somewhat one-sided ; the danger from political and business analogies I should have thought was just as great. The ' tricks of language and unconscious analogies ' by which, for example, the Book of Common Prayer often makes out the universe to be a political arena and God a political figure, may have been replaced in the modern mind by scientific analogies, but this is not the only malady which that mind suffers, nor, I think, is it now the malady most pressing for a cure.

MICHAEL OAKESHOTT.

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ADVANCED VERBAL EDUCATION

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RHETORIC, by I. A. Richards (Oxford, 8/6).

SCEPTICISM AND POETRY, by D. G. James (Allen and Unwin, 12/6).

Dr. Richards's new book (a printed course of lectures) is smaller than his last, and it is less large in ambition. Or perhaps it would be better to say that the largeness is less explicit. For on the first page we are made aware of a familiar tone:

> 'Of course, inevitably *at present* [author's italics], we have no measure with which to calculate the extent and degree of our hourly losses in communication.'

The reader apprehends that a science is to be established; and he is fully confirmed: *e.g.*—

> 'It is time to come down from these high speculations to consider some simple steps in analysis which may make the translation of our skill with metaphor into explicit science easier.' (p. 95).

On the other hand, bound up with the scientific there are educational aims; the book is preoccupied with 'the justification of advanced verbal education' (p. 74):

> 'A discussion of the reasons for the choice of words—which too often seems a trivial exchange of whimsies—can become an introduction to the theory of all choices. The art of so transforming it into the central discipline of education waits to be rediscovered, but the better we understand what place words hold in our lives the readier we shall be to admit that to think about their choice is the most convenient mode of thinking about the principle of all our choices.' (p. 86).

—More than a discipline of education and the technique of a new science seem to be involved there, the reader observes.

In fairness, of course, a certain modesty, a deprecatory tentativeness—'some simple steps,' 'may make,' 'can become,'

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' waits to be discovered '—that there is about these formulations has also to be observed. But the general effect of the book is, not the less, of a largeness of promise and an impressiveness of operation quite disproportionate to anything that emerges—comes out of the hat, so to speak. Moreover this effect is such as to impose the regretful conviction that had the ambition been less the profit might very well have been greater. For instance, the reader has to comment that the scientific pretension, while in itself seeming helpless to become anything more than a pretension, stultifies the concern for education.

Dr. Richards proposes 'a persistent, systematic, detailed inquiry into how words work ' (p. 23). He proposes to replace the old Rhetoric, which worked ' on a microscopic scale ' by a ' revived Rhetoric ' that shall undertake inquiry into ' the modes of meaning ' ' on a microscopic scale by using theorems about the structure of the fundamental conjectural units of meaning and the conditions through which they, and their interconnections, arise ' (p. 23). He tackles, among other problems, these:

> ' What is the connection between the mind and the world by which events in the mind mean other events in the world? How does a thought come to be " of " whatever it is that it is a thought of?' (p. 28).

So it will be immediately plain that he raises some difficult philosophic issues. However, this book is characteristic of Dr. Richards's work (for it's not merely a matter of the small scale) in that, while these issues as raised claim a good deal of importance in the total effect of the book, it is not part of his plan to develop them with the rigour and completeness that invite attention from trained philosophers. The reader of literary interests, it being apparent that he, primarily, is the reader addressed, notes the general nature of the issues and the difficulties and debates they involve, but tells himself that it is to particular analysis of examples (or, if he has educational interests, to ' practical criticism ') that this theoretical matter leads up, and that there lies the test. Dr. Richards gives him explicit and repeated confirmation:

> ' In brief, how we use this theorem best shows us what the theorem is.' (p. 27).

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'The context theorem of meaning would prevent our making hundreds of baseless and disabling assumptions that we commonly make about meanings, over-simplifications that create false problems interfering with closer comparisons—and that is its main service.' (p. 38).

'Our theory, as it had its roots in practice, must also have its fruit in increased skill.' (p. 95).

The report of the literary reader, as he shuts the book, must be that the use to which the theorem has been put doesn't much recommend it, that nothing much in the way of 'close comparisons' has been attempted, and that, from the point of view of anyone of any intensity of literary interests, the theory as related to practice in the book doesn't at all look like bearing fruit in skill. It's not that the book doesn't contain a good deal that it's possible to imagine a reader profiting by, if only he can apply it. But it's not easy to imagine his profiting substantially without a training in practical criticism that he certainly cannot get from the book itself. And readers of any experience in practical criticism will be apt to feel that they get little that they hadn't arrived at for themselves in the practice of analytic appreciation of actual texts.

It is remarkable that anyone who has turned his mind as much as Dr. Richards has on the subtleties of language should be able to show himself so little interested in analysis of that kind. He is so little interested that he would probably be surprised to hear that he provides virtually none. His own kind of analysis, and what he does offer isn't very impressive even in show, is the servant of a onesided preoccupation. He has an unbalanced desire to discredit 'the Proper Meaning Superstition' (p. 11) or 'the One and Only True Meaning Superstition' (p. 39)—unbalanced in a way that is suggested by his comment on

> She looks like sleep,
> As she would catch another Antony
> In her strong toil of grace.

'"Her strong toil of grace." Where, in terms of what entries in what possible dictionary, do the meanings here of *toil* and *grace* come to rest?' (p. 49).

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It is an interesting Shakespearean complexity, but surely the relevant analysis is not as illimitable a business as Dr. Richards suggests? We could wish that he had done at least some—say a page or two—of the analysis, so that we could test our suspicion that no one would go on elaborating it for so very long who had a due concern for the one right total effect of the passage, and was reading the two-and-a-half lines with an adequate and disinterested interest in the context to which they belong, and not as an opportunity for showing what fresh ingenuities and subtleties fresh wits are capable of.

The fact is that Dr. Richards, in effect, lends his authority to the uncritical interest in 'ambiguity' with which 'the new criticism,' and Cambridge in particular, have become associated. It is, of course, important, for education and criticism, that inadequate and inhibiting academic preconceptions—of correctness and the working of language in general—should be combated, and that there should be due training in the appreciation of the subtleties of English in its finest use. But the discovery of an interest in ambiguities and shifts is very far from making less necessary a due concern for relevance, and a due perception that such a concern involves a training in sensitive and submissive integrity—and integration—of response. Dr. Richards doesn't need telling this; he could have said as much for himself. Nevertheless, though he talks of making the Philosophy of Rhetoric 'the central discipline of education,' it isn't towards discipline, or at any rate the essential kind of discipline, that his book actually tends. And this radical failing is seen as the price of the scientific pretension.

'Science' of course, is an ambiguous word, and Dr. Richards is not without his skill in using ambiguities and shifts and other subtleties of language. By the use of such words as 'macroscopic' and 'microscopic,' the references to the 'theory of interpretation' as a 'branch of biology' (p. 12), talk about measurement—

> 'One of the aims of these lectures will be to speculate about some of the measures we should require in attempting such estimates' (p. 3)

—by such means as these the suggestion is conveyed of an incipient laboratory science. At the most respectable we find this:

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> ' We may reasonably hope that systematic study will in time permit us to compare, describe, and explain these systematic ambiguity or transfer patterns on a scale as much surpassing our best present-day Dictionary Technique as, say, our present competence in chemistry surpasses that of Bacon who foresaw it.'[1] (p. 73).

On which, in spite of that last disarming—or intimidating—note, we can only comment: ' Well, perhaps ; but this nevertheless is a most unpromising start.'

In any case the advance, one would think, would have to be by way of better reading in the literary critic's sense ; and it is difficult to believe that the book will do very much to further that. This it not to say that it doesn't contain some interesting matter. The discussion of metaphor, for instance, is probably better than any to be found elsewhere. But it is an oddly limited and unsatisfying discussion of metaphor that deals no more and goes no further in particular analysis than Dr. Richards does. Of course, he does some illustrating, but the limitations of his approach and his analysis may be suggested by one of his boldest ventures:

> Had it pleas'd heaven
> To try me with affliction, had he rain'd
> All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head,
> Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
> Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,
> I should have found in some part of my soul
> A drop of patience ; but alas! to make me
> The fixed figure for the time of scorn
> To point his slow and moving finger at ;
> Yet could I bear that too ; well, very well.
> But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,

[1]The next two sentences run: ' Even now, if we could take *systematic* cognizance of even a small part of the shifts we fleetingly observe, the effect would be like that of introducing the multiplication table to calculators who happened to know the working of a few sums and no others. And with such a clarification, such a translation of our skill into comprehension, a new era of human understanding and co-operation in thinking would be at hand.'

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Where either I must live or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up ; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in!

' What are we to say of that word *steep*, how answer Kames? He is indeed too mild, in saying " the resemblance is too faint to be agreeable." It's not a case of a lack of resemblance but of too much diversity, too much sheer oppositeness. For Poverty, the tenor, is a state of deprivation, of dessication ; but the vehicle —the sea or vat in which Othello is to be steeped—gives an instance of superfluity. In poverty all is outgoing, without income ; were we " steeped to the very lips " it would be the incomings that we would have to fight against. You will have noticed that the whole speech returns again and again to these liquid images : " had they rained," " a drop of patience," " The fountain from the which my current runs, Or else dries up." None of these helps *steep* out, and one of them " a drop of patience " makes the confused, disordered effect of *steep* seem much worse. I do not myself find any defence of the word except this, which seems indeed quite sufficient—as dramatic necessities commonly are—that Othello is himself horribly disordered, that the utterance is part of " the storm of horrour and outrage " with which he is assailing Desdemona and that a momentarily deranged mind speaks so and *is* obsessed with images regardless of their fittingness. Othello, we might say, is drowning in this storm (*cf.* Act II, i, 212-21), and knows it.'

—Yet this criticism is quite arbitrary, the product of a rigid and insensitive approach. ' Poverty is . . . a state of deprivation, of dessication '—yes, for Dr. Richards it is. But for Othello, Shakespeare's Othello, it's a state of being overwhelmed with the squalors of poverty ; and why it should be out of order for Othello to imagine himself up to the lips, cumbered and immobilized (' captivity ' follows in the next line), in a stagnant pool or filthy morass, lifting his chin to keep out the unpalatable ' incomings,'—that can be explained only by legalistic arguments. No principle to be respected by criticism forbids Shakespeare or Othello to imagine poverty in this way ; and ' steep,' for the adequately

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responsive reader, is not exposed to the kind of defence Dr. Richards offers it. As for the ' drop of patience,' that oughtn't to present any difficulty: it relates in a sufficiently obvious way to the 'current' that, in the latter part of the passage, ' dries up ' ; the kinds of ' affliction ' described in the first part would have left him with enough of the vital current to be able to endure them (for there's no need to protest that Patience, being essentially marmoreal and monumental, oughtn't to be represented as a liquid).

This instance suggests the inadequacy of relation between theorizing and practice that characterizes *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. It is not, after all, mysterious that the book should produce its odd effect of a rigour, pertinacity and radical daring of operation that somehow, when we take stock, seem to have been mainly illusion.

The second book at the head of this review is largely directed against Dr. Richards. Its criticism is from a philosophic point of view, and deserves more attention than it can be given here. But one feels that it is the kind of criticism that Dr. Richards minds least. A correlated feeling is that here, in the author, is someone who might—if his philosophic abhorrence would let him—learn from Dr. Richards ; and one's regret is increased that Dr. Richards should have provided so much excuse of various kinds for the refusal of his services, and that he shouldn't have concentrated on giving the best element in his work a more general efficacy. Mr. James is, although clearly a writer of cultivation, distinguished intelligence and philosophic training, in a sense naïve (a sense intended to be quite inoffensive) about the ' modes of meaning ' and the ' interanimation of words '—see, for instance, his chapter on ' The Imaginative Use of Language.'

He too, when he offers his own literary criticism (of which there is a great deal in the book) is not concerned enough with the concrete of poetry. It is characteristic of his approach that he can, without intimating the essential difference between the two versions, say: ' The importance of *Hyperion*, in both its versions, is that in them Keats's imagination took on a more metaphysical character than in any other parts of his work.'

Scepticism and Poetry is a very suggestive book and will repay critical attention.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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TEACHING POETRY

TEACHING POETRY, compiled by the Society for Teachers of English (Oxford University Press, 2/6).

The rather depressing suggestions of this title don't apply to what can be done with poetry in school. A certain amount of mathematics can be driven into the head of almost any child: with poetry it's more a question of developing potentialities which some children have and others haven't. Most of them, whatever their training at school, will never read a line of poetry after they've left: and perhaps their English instruction should be limited, arranged so as to render them as capable as possible, first of coping with what reading matter they actually will meet with after school, and then of deciding what they mean to say or write and saying or writing it effectively. Poetry would then be almost a 'specialist' subject, and after a certain age taken only by suitable pupils. (These are tentative suggestions).

In this connection the last section of the book, *Why Teach Poetry*, seems inadequate. It is true enough that imagination is a valuable quality: but it remains unproved that the imagination of any very large number of children can be developed through poetry. Also a narrow or distorted meaning is given to the word 'imagination.' To children who are destined to be farmers, mechanics or office workers and the like, the 'quinquereme of Nineveh' business is worse than a bore, it's an obstacle. Imagination inevitably is influenced by interests. Children who have a genuine and very lively imaginative sympathy with birds, animals, and their own friends, are apt to be bored or bewildered by the quinqueremes. The latter kind of imagination is much over-rated. A good deal of time spent on poetry in schools would be better spent on woodwork, gardening, etc., where these are possible.

But perhaps it's unfair to regard the book as more than an attempt to make the best of present school conditions. These require that children shall be taught in droves, even though it is a waste of time trying to 'teach' poetry to many of them. The compilers might accept this last conclusion—it seems anyhow to be implied in an exercise they provide (for backward pupils) on Masefield's *Cargoes*: 'If you are fond of drawing, sketch the three ships mentioned.' As a means of giving the master a rest, this is excellent. Apart from this, they would be better occupied

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in a good many other ways. If they are really backward and have no wealth or nepotism to save them, they will probably earn their living as industrial cogs ; and a ' progressive ' school would try to give them some understanding of their place in the system.

There are other reasons why the teaching of poetry should be limited. Bad or merely dull teaching can do more harm than neglect: an excellent paper curriculum may be ruined in clumsy hands, while a good teacher can find scope in almost any scheme except an examination syllabus. Where syllabuses have to be arranged poetry may be included at the 9-12 stage, where poor teaching does less harm ; and from 13 up to the inevitable school certificate poetry should be sparingly included unless the personal qualities of the teacher ensure that it will be well handled. At the 13-15 stage there is much English work that can (comparatively speaking) be mechanically taught with profit. The questions whether, how, how much and at what ages poetry can be ' taught ' need ventilating.

The aim of the booklet is practical. ' It makes particular suggestions and translates into the language of the classroom that conception of the function of poetry with which the compilers find themselves most in sympathy.' The particular suggestions will be reached in a moment: what the second claim means is difficult to understand. The discussion at the classroom level of the use and value of poetry? But that doesn't enter into the scheme of the handbook. Or does it mean that the compilers will provide children with poems of the kind that they (compilers) themselves like? If so one may complain of certain limitations in the choice of poems—it does not represent a very wide range of sympathies. There is nothing comic, witty or satirical in the twenty poems discussed ; and especially in the poems for younger children the limited notion of imagination seems to have narrowed the choice. For the 11-13 group, the poems suggested are: three poems on the eagle, Bridges on the spring, and *Cargoes*. The Tennyson *Eagle* is satisfactory for the purpose, but the others, by Andrew Young and T. W. H. Crosland, are quite unsuitable. And can one really expect children of this age to be interested in a poem that begins ' Wanton with long delay the gay spring leaping cometh '?

The poems that ' go down ' best with children of 11 and 12 are nonsense and semi-nonsense rimes (Lear, Carroll, etc.), humorous verse (Gilpin, etc.), narrative verse (*Ancient Mariner*,

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some ballads), poems about birds, animals and so on (but not in the manner of Chesterton's donkey: it's Chesterton and not the donkey that they find ridiculous), and, especially, de la Mare (but, again, not *The Listeners*). The latter is quite unrivalled when he is writing frankly, not surreptitiously, for children.

Three poetry 'lessons' are suggested for each of the four age-groups from 11 to 16 years. In the Introduction there are one or two useful hints: on learning how to memorize, and 'by discussing how a poem ought to be read a teacher can bring a form to an appreciation of its significance without obtruding the fact.' This assists understanding of tone and feeling, especially in poems (some of Sassoon, Eliot's *The Rock*, *passim*) where there is irony. This is missed wholesale unless some question is asked to focus attention on a particular point. The Introduction also has some proper observations on the practice in some examinations of making 'a poem the basis of an exercise in intellectual comprehension . . . tests to discover whether the poem has been "understood" are usually illogical and tautologous. They are illogical because, in attempting to test clearness of thought, they show a misunderstanding of the word "understood"; and they are tautologous because any "meaning" which is expressed in prose is merely a repetition of what has been said with much greater significance in the poem itself.' But in backing this by remarks of Coleridge ('Poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood') and T. S. Eliot, the writers seem to weaken their case by a piece of special pleading for a particular theory of poetry.

The compilers are aware of the dangers of a rigid technique of approach, so that the treatment of poems varies. In most cases, after a first reading, general impressions are asked for, and detailed questions are then put—on the rhythm, imagery, associations of words, why a particular word is used, etc.—designed to assist the reader to appreciate various effects for himself. The application of the method varies a good deal in effectiveness. The value of the book is its suggestiveness: it may stimulate others to work out their own lessons on similar lines. Though one gathers from enquiries among schoolmasters that the methods have in some places been used for years. Unfortunately (for copyright reasons?) many of the poems examined are not printed with the questionnaire, the reader being referred to the *Dragon Book of Verse*, another

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Oxford publication. One of the best examples of *method* is the examination of *Cargoes*. Some of the questions are: '(Stanza 2) What do the words *Spanish Galleon, Isthmus, dipping, palm-green shore* suggest? Notice the change of rhythm . . . What does the cargo suggest? (Stanza 3) Notice the change in rhythm again, especially in the second half of the first line (the closely packed consonants suggest the difficulty she has in progressing, carried on by the word *butting*) ; compare these with the opening lines of the poem.' Comparison is sometimes used to bring out the characteristics of poems.

According to the Introduction the lesson ' should always include an opportunity for some kind of creative work.' Unfortunately the assertion is left unsupported ; the case needs to be stated. The connotations of ' creative ' are uncertain ; one often hears a piece of school work described as ' creative,' but it conveys nothing except the speaker's approval, or the presence of a theory that creative activities are accessible and desirable for everyone, and that hence revivals of folk-dancing are superior to going for a walk or seeing a film. In this book, after answering questions on the three eagle poems, young pupils are required to ' write in prose or verse the feelings of an eagle or lion in captivity'; after *Cargoes* to ' Describe (in verse if you can) (*a*) A man at work wood-carving in the Middle Ages. (*b*) A man at work in a modern mass-production factory ' ; after Keats' *To Autumn* ' Get the class to write another unrhymed stanza on the woods, fields, and hedges of autumn.' There may be occasions for this kind of exercise. If done before reading a poem it may clarify pre-conceptions, induce receptiveness, soften a spot so that the poem may make a deeper impression, be more fully understood. If done afterwards, the poem may have set going trains of thought which will give pupils something to write about ; this may be useful sometimes to obviate division of work into watertight compartments. And for varying work exercises in writing verse (only for those who wish to) may be good. But I doubt whether much is gained by regularly requiring ' creative ' work of this sort. It is possible that learners, who will contemptuously dismiss in a moment a poem which has taken more time and effort to write than they will ever be capable of exerting, may acquire humility by learning some of the difficulty of writing. And at some ages imitation and parody of style can advance understanding.

D. THOMPSON.
R. O'MALLEY.

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THE STATE OF FARMING

FARMING ENGLAND, by A. G. Street (Batsford, 7/6).

Mr. Street's survey of farming England has a workmanlike intention which is welcome after so many ' beauty ' books about the countryside. His foreword shows that besides being a business farmer he is alert to those intuitions which are part and parcel of the life of the land. His observation of such facts as that a good ploughman may be more easily taught to drive a tractor than a good engineer to plough, or that a good horseman learns to handle an aeroplane more quickly than an expert motorist, are pertinent of what the basis of English technical skill has been. He alludes to the power of the farm labourer to assimilate the intricacies of whatever machinery has been introduced into agriculture. There is little that is more complicated than a self-binder, for instance ; yet the speed with which the man in charge of it puts his finger on the spot when anything goes wrong, shows his simultaneous awareness of every part of the process while it is working. As Mr. Street points out, ' The farmer and farm labourer of to-day do not merely enjoy the benefits of machinery, they must master all its intricacies and idiosyncrasies, for in most cases there is no machine-shop and garage round the corner, and weather rarely permits delay in the repair of farm equipment.'

Few people other than the specialist (and the reason for this book is the fact that farming has become specialized away from the common experience it once was) realize the foul state of agriculture in this country. Lack of stock and lack of labour have resulted in lost heart in the soil, lost tilth, lost drainage. This even within sixty miles of the greatest potential market in the world ; a state it will take years to rectify. Meanwhile lorries plough through the narrowest lanes bringing from afar things which the local soil could produce.

What Mr. Street's book illustrates more than anything is the way in which farming seems to have lost its local roots, and is wavering to and fro in the conflicting winds of Whitehall policies. The Milk Board is a case in point. The merest gleam of a profit in selling liquid milk has meant the jettisoning of the old kind of farming based in long experience of local conditions. Cheese-

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making Cheshire, the Shires whose strong grass meant beef production, the stock-raising North, land that has grown corn or grazed sheep—all are turned to the production of liquid milk. The farmer hardly sees his produce ; it ' is represented by an entry in a milk-book.' The helplessness of business farming under such conditions need not be enlarged on, nor desperate wholesale expedients of the mass poultry-farming sort with its inevitable retribution of wholesale epidemics.

But there is another side to the picture. Where Mr. Street has travelled he has found here and there the small family farm, and occasionally farms (as in Cheshire a cheese-making farm) where local tradition has not been scrapped. He has found that these alone seems to stand up to economic depression, being worked with little hired help, and being ' much more a way of life than a business proposition.' The family live largely off the holding (by modern standards a dull, if not a poor, living) ; the only effect of bad times is to compel them to restrict their purchases of things they do not produce. One can only hope that there will be enough of these to carry on their local style of cultivation until the present chaos is resolved.

ADRIAN BELL.

WHAT SCIENCE STANDS FOR, by Sir John Boyd Orr, Prof. A. V. Hill, Prof. J. C. Philip, Sir Richard Gregory, Sir A. Daniel Hall, and Prof. Lancelot Hogben (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 5/-).[1]

' We are witnessing a race between scientific progress and social instability.'

' Science . . . demands a supreme loyalty to truth which must override all other claims if error and delusion are not to result. The search for truth is not fulfilled by giving bare facts, numbers or abstract theories only ; there must be also some

[1]Consisting of six essays, five of which were given as addresses to the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Blackpool in 1936, and the sixth, by Prof. A. V. Hill, on ' The Humanity of Science,' was given as a broadcast talk.

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sense of values and of perspective.' (*Nature*, April 24th, 1937, p. 689).

There has been during the last few years a considerable growth of concern, in both public and private scientific gatherings, for the place of science in a muddled world (to be correlated with a slowly increasing realization of the muddle). On the one hand we have the increased power over the environment which has been considered one of the logical outcomes of scientific research—all the various developments of control too numerous to mention. On the other hand science has been said to threaten ' not only the enjoyments of the benefits that it confers but the simpler joys of existence before its arrival.' There is the over-production of foodstuffs and other goods side by side with unemployment and malnutrition, and a natural abhorrence of war is increased as the products of research are turned faster and faster into the means of destruction. An even greater danger is emphasized by Sir Daniel Hall when he shows how the apparently peaceful products of scientific discovery may be and are being used by the unscrupulous to subdue and coerce subconsciously—in fact to condition—men's minds until they become mental as well as physical slaves.

The problem is a complex one and we are faced with the question of whether the errors are in the *production* of the powers that research has made possible or whether they are caused by those who are in a position to *handle* those powers. More than once recently a truce to discovery has been called but the folly of staying research for a time is obvious if only because the very nature of the muddle points to the need of further research (though it may need to be a different direction). The writers of these essays are all from somewhat different points of view concerned with this problem and (though their success in propounding it and then in attempting to solve it is varying) as a whole they are unanimous in the conclusion that it is not ' science ' that is at fault but the uses to which its discoveries are put. Sir Daniel Hall and in particular Professor Hogben go further in suggesting how the problem may be met. An education (which should be based on science) must be reorganized and must be available for all. Professor Hogben shows how, as well as the administrators, industrialists and the mass of citizens, the scientists, particularly in their capacity as teachers, need a new form of training. In essence

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he sees our error to lie in having trained a class of specialists (scientists) ' to mind their own business ' and our contemporary statesmen ' to legislate in ignorance of the technical forces which inexorably control the character of social relations.' He shows the failure of science teaching moulded mainly by the demand for specialists, and requires that the new teaching shall not only deal with the use of science in every-day life, but also show the growth of civilization in relation to the ever-expanding field of discovery. This involves a full understanding of the history of science, particularly in its social relationships, by school and university teachers, and inevitably leads to the discussion and realization of the undeveloped possibilities of science. The outline is given of a scheme whereby this may be done, and mention is made of certain movements towards this method of approach. The principles set forth suggest a very valuable way toward recovery in the methods of science teaching, although many may criticize different points and see signs of a bias perhaps inevitable in a short survey written from one point of view. In particular, instead of a humanism which (by inference) is to be *based* on science one would rather have seen an education for a humanism in which science plays an integral part.

Professor Hogben, as we see, does not relieve the scientists of all fault, and Sir Daniel Hall asks for an organization of scientists who ' will express a corporative opinion upon public affairs.' Though many of the leaders in research may wish only to do their work in peace and avoid the problems of the outside world ' in the end such detachment means slavery and the destruction of the freedom of thought upon which science itself depends.' The people to whom the powers due to scientific advances are given, and the ways in which they are used are the concern of all citizens ; by the virtue of the understanding they should have scientists must make these matters peculiarly their concern.

Of the other essays that by Sir John Orr is of importance ; in it, with a full appreciation of the nature of the problem, he reviews the application of research to the question of nutrition. This account, together with the two dealt with above are worth special attention and all of the essays should be read by those who are concerned for the problems inherent in progress.

C. E. LUCAS.

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TUESDAY'S HASH

THE FIFTH DECAD OF THE CANTOS, by Ezra Pound (Faber and Faber, 6/-).

OUT OF THE PICTURE, by Louis Macneice (Faber and Faber, 6/-).

THE DISAPPEARING CASTLE, by Charles Madge (Faber and Faber, 6/-).

POEMS, by Rex Warner (Boriswood, 5/-).

Poetry must be kept up—verse will still be turned out—despite the tedium and the effort. To-day we confront a depressing situation in which the elder poets seem to have spent themselves and the younger ones can achieve nothing. The present volumes under consideration give one no reason for questioning—rather they offer further confirmation of—the views expressed by Mr. H. A. Mason in a review which appeared in the last number of *Scrutiny* (*Poetry in 1936*).

Mr. Pound, for instance, will no doubt continue to produce his Cantos with the same admirable but uncritical persistency which James Joyce has shown in *Work in Progress*. The theme of *The Fifth Decad* is 'Usury'—usury in its various historical manifestations. But one feels as if the theme does not matter very much . . . as if any other theme would have produced much the same result.

There is the same terseness and the same unvarying invective, the same bric à brac of erudition—or rather of information—that one finds in the earlier Cantos. And there is much that probably only the poet's Inner Circle can fully appreciate. Mr. Pound is ferocious:

> In their soul was usura and in their hearts cowardise
> In their minds was stink and corruption
> Two sores ran together, Talleyrand stank with shanker and hell pissed up Metternich
> Filth stank as in our day . . .

But it is the ferocity of a poseur, not of a Swift. There are betraying symptoms—a lack of sane balance coupled with an attitude of hearty familiarity with Great Men and Great Events

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(Napoleon and Pietro Leopoldo are his two heroes)—of a sort of literary fascism. One might call Mr. Pound the Browning *de nos jours*.

Mr. Macneice has written a 'verse play.' The verse might well have been dispensed with. *Out of the Picture* is possibly good theatre—bad plays are sometimes good theatre—since it has a certain Hollywood slickness and all the paraphernalia of an Auden play—radio announcers, choruses, parodies of hymn tunes and card-board comic types. Indeed, but for the example of Auden, one feels that the play would certainly not have been written. Unfortunately, the wit of the dialogue only resembles Auden at his lowest levels; and the general Danse Macabre is quite unrealized. And as the comic fails to be witty, so the attempted criticism fails to achieve any real seriousness; the caricatures are ineffective. The 'satire' cannot rise above this level:

> Summer is a Comen in. If there is war
> What sort of summer will it be?
> Will there be any green grass left at Lord's?
> Will there be any horses to run at Ascot? . . .

But one cannot feel any deep dislike for this play; it is too insipid, too second-hand to evoke a pronounced reaction. Amateur companies might do well to perform it, for it is essentially an amateur's play.

Mr. Rex Warner and Mr. Charles Madge are, one gathers, among the more distinguished of our younger poets. They are certainly still very young. Mr. Warner is sometimes personal and metaphysical:

> Souls are not simple, do not bleat or blossom
> like silly sheep or roses in a jar
> They are terribly tossed, cruelly corroded
> very prone to dizziness, in need of exercise and air—

sometimes political:

> Come then you who couldn't stick it,
> lovers of cricket, underpaid journalists,
> lovers of nature, hikers, O touring cyclists,
> now you must be men and women and there's a chance.

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> Now you can join us, now all together sing All Power,
> not tomorrow but now in this hour, All Power
> to Lovers of Life, to Workers, to the Hammer, the Sickle,
> the Blood—

and sometimes nature-lover-tourist:

> Oriental Cairo! Splendid Alexandria!
> I leave you gladly for meadows of grass
> The whitening wash of willow, corn's winding waves . . .

Always he is impassioned, naïvely innocent and not unpleasant; in fact he is almost refreshing in his lack of sophistication.

Mr. Madge is much more profound, but writes with less élan, and is more self-conscious in his reaching after the profound:

> Fly, life, in quiet despair of empty air
> Between the two-fold freezing of the poles
> As still as eyesight. Fly and be found where
> The cloud-coloured sea soft over the shoals
> Breaks like fine hands over the numb sands.
> . . . I am broken. The air is full of holes.

Yeats and Hopkins are generally the models here—models at once easy and dangerous. Mr. Madge can imitate the simplicity and compactness of Yeats' verse; but the imitation is purely a verbal-stylistic one; the simplicity is not the result of any arduous discipline, otherwise one would not find those occasional lapses into the Shakespearian manner: :

> For we create—proud tyrants of a moment—
> Bright visions born between despair and fear . . .

or those still more frequent lapses into the ridiculous:

> Beyond the printed words that catch their eyes
> And the chance gleam of some suspended sign
> May fall the blissful moment of surprise
> When the dull bourgeois can become sublime.

H. L. BRADBROOK.

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THE RECOGNITION OF ISAAC ROSENBERG

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF ISAAC ROSENBERG. Edited by D. W. Harding and Gordon Bottomley (Chatto and Windus, 12/6).

My criticism against this book is that it doesn't contain as introduction the essay that one of its editors, D. W. Harding, contributed to *Scrutiny* for March, 1935. Such an introduction would very much have improved Rosenberg's chances of obtaining, at last, the recognition due to him, and is the more to be desired in that the volume, being exhaustive, includes a bulk of work that isn't in itself strikingly significant. Not that it's a question of vindicating a slender talent ; ' genius ' is the word for Rosenberg, who has all the robustness of genius. But the history of his reputation brings home to one that it is easy to be too optimistic about the chances original genius may expect of getting recognized.

To begin with he had a measure of luck. Circumstanced as he was, how easily he might have escaped all notice, and, dying an insignificant Jewish private with a few pieces of illegible scrawl in his tunic pocket, have disappeared for good (he was killed in 1918), a total loss to English poetry. But he had gained the attention of several representative figures in Georgian letters ; patrons who, though the spirit of Rosenberg's work was hardly congenial to what they themselves stood for,[1] kept in benevolent touch with him. And in 1922 the small selection of his verse made by Gordon Bottomley (it was introduced by Laurence Binyon) came out. It is disquieting now to think that that volume did not establish Rosenberg's reputation ; did not, although the book was reviewed and Rosenberg became an anthology poet—one of the five hundred, and further distinguished as ' one of the war-poets.' The history is the more significant in that Mr. T. S. Eliot (it was the occasion of my noting Rosenberg's name as one to remember) mentioned him in a Poetry Bookshop Chapbook as a

[1] ' If you do find time to read my poems, and I sent them because I think them worth reading, for God's Sake! don't say they're obscure.' (page 298).—We remember Hopkins.

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poet who would have received notice if criticism had been performing its function.

But it is one thing to feel that here is something strange, original and interesting, and another to recognize its nature and significance. I recall the conviction that Mr. Eliot expressed years later regarding Marianne Moore: 'that Miss Moore's poems form part of the small body of durable poetry written in our time; of that small body of writings among what passes for poetry, in which an original sensibility and alert intelligence and deep feeling have been engaged in maintaining the life of the English language.' I think that something of that kind might have been said, and with far more appropriateness, of Isaac Rosenberg. But, though I knew Gordon Bottomley's selection and was 'interested' in Rosenberg, I cannot pretend that it had ever occurred to me to say anything like it. And I confess this with the less confusion since even Mr. Eliot, who stopped to call attention to Rosenberg, appears to have left him with the passing mention.

I believe that the recognition of his genius will turn out to date from Mr. Harding's essay. That essay must either supply the reviewer of the present volume with his criticism, or leave him with nothing to say. Or perhaps it is still worth while to insist on Rosenberg's astonishing force of originality. It was a force that, after the past decade's changes in poetic fashions, it is not immediately easy to appreciate. He writes in an early letter (p. 364):

> 'You mustn't forget the circumstances I have been brought up in, the little education I have had. Nobody ever told me what to read, or put poetry in my way. I don't think I knew what real poetry was till I read Keats a couple of years ago.'

His early work shows the influence of Rossetti, Swinburne, Francis Thompson, and other poets of the nineteenth century. As for contemporary influences, since he was born in 1890 it will be realized that his debt here, in respect of emancipation and stimulus, cannot have amounted to much: at the time of his adolescence the shocking latest thing in poetry was represented by the little Salvation Army epics of the present Poet Laureate. Yet when, in 1916, Rosenberg writes (p. 371),

> 'Simple *poetry*,—that is where an interesting complexity

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> of thought is kept in tone and right value to the dominating idea so that it is understandable and still ungraspable,'

he is describing the spirit of his efforts in poetic technique over the past several years.

He could not, of course, have arrived at this notion of poetry, and at the astonishing technical skill that has been so little appreciated, had he been mainly preoccupied with earning fame as a poet. There are those sentences quoted by Mr. Harding from a letter of 1916 (p. 373 in the present volume):

> ' I will not leave a corner of my consciousness covered up but saturate myself with the strange and extraordinary new conditions of this life, and it will all refine itself into poetry later on.'

This is the voice of the young man who already before the war was expressing in poetry, not a revolutionary's or social reformer's, but a radical dissatisfaction with civilized life. His interest in life, in fact, is radical and religious in the same sense as D. H. Lawrence's. It has to be added that we must credit him, on the evidence of his best work, with an extraordinarily mature kind of detachment such as is not characteristic of Lawrence—to say this first gives the right force to the observation that of the two Rosenberg was much more an artist.

The spiritual strength manifested in the detachment of his poetry was needed in an almost incredible degree for the writing of it. For it is hardly credible, though it is an indubitable fact, that he wrote his best work while a private (for a while he was a lance-corporal) in the Expeditionary Force—wrote it in pencil on scraps of paper and in improvised notebooks. ' I have been forbidden,' he tells a correspondent (p. 312), ' to send poems home, as the censor won't be bothered with going through such rubbish . . . ' Actually he managed to send a good deal home, to be typed before it should get lost (and the editors had not only typescript to deal with, but a mass of pencil-scrawl, some of it decipherable, if at all, only by the most unwearying pertinacity). He carried his poetic ideas as they shaped, and his technical problems, about with him in his head, and the kind of concentration that often earned him punishment for absent-mindedness is suggested by this characteristic letter from the field:

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' . . . I think if I can work it out on the new lines it will be most clear and most extraordinary. Its called "The Unicorn" now. I am stuck in the most difficult parts ; I have to feel a set of unusual emotions which I simply cant feel yet. However if I keep on thinking about it it may come we may not begin a letter with our address but work it in the text, I generally forget about it as I go on writing.

Pte I.R. 22311
11th K.O.R.L.
Attached 229 Field Coy R.Es. B E F

I think with you that poetry should be definite thought and clear expression, however subtle ; I dont think there should be any vagueness at all ; but a sense of something hidden and felt to be there ; Now when my things fail to be clear I am sure it is because of the luckless choice of a word or a failure to introduce a word that would flash my idea plain as it is to my own mind. I believe my Amazon poem to be my best poem. If there is any difficulty it must be in words here and there the changing or elimination of which may make the poem clear. It has taken me about a year to write ; for I have changed and rechanged it and thought hard over that poem and striven to get that sense of inexorableness the human (or unhuman) side of this war has. It even penetrates behind human life for the " Amazon " who speaks in the second part of the poem is imagined to be without her lover yet, while all her sisters have theirs, the released spirits of the slain earth men ; her lover yet remains to be released. I hope however, to be home on leave, and talk it over, some time this side of the year.'

It is fortunate that we have these letters. Without them, impressive as the poetry is, we could not have realized the extraordinary heroism lying behind it. Not that there is anything obviously or consciously ' heroic ' in them. They are matter-of-fact, unexcited and businesslike. Here is his reference to *Dead Man's Dump*, that conclusive witness to the success of his resolve not ' to leave a corner of his consciousness covered up ' :

' I've written some lines suggested by going out wiring, or rather carrying wire up the line on limbers and running over dead bodies lying about. I dont think what I've written is

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very good but I think the substance is, and when I work on it I'll make it fine.'

This is the next letter:

> ' I liked your criticism of " Dead Mans dump." Mr. Binyon has often sermonised lengthily over my working on two different principles in the same thing, and I know how it spoils the unity of a poem. But if I couldn't before, I can now, I am sure plead the absolute necessity of fixing an idea before it is lost, because of the situation its concieved in. Regular rythms I do not like much, but of course it depends on where the stress and accent are laid. I think there is nothing finer than the vigorous opening of Lycydas for music ; yet it is regular. Now I think if Andrew Marvell had broken up his rythms more he would have been considered a terrific poet. As it is I like his poem urging his mistress to love because they have not a thousand years to love in and he can't afford to wait. (I forget the name of the poem) well I like it more than Lycydas.
>
> I have written a much finer poem which Ive asked my sister to send you.'

—The quiet detachment of that is one aspect of the intensity, the intense disinterestedness, of genius. The spelling and punctuation (rightly preserved by the editors wherever they had the original text) only serve to make the genius more apparent.

It is still, perhaps, not superfluous to insist that the ' imperfections ' and obscurities of Rosenberg's poetry are not, as some even of his friendly correspondents (one reads between the lines) seem to have thought, of the same order as his faults of grammar, punctuation and spelling, or in any way analogous to them. If he was, like Blake, ' uneducated,' he was also like Blake in ways in which Blake had the advantage over most educated people ; and he appears to have worked more persistently at his problems of poetic technique than Blake did. To criticism of a kind one can imagine, he replies:

> ' It is much my fault if I am misunderstood, I know ; but I also feel a kind of injustice if my idea is not grasped or is ignored, and only petty cavilling at form, which I had known all along was so, is continually knocked into me. I feel quite

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sure that form is only a question of time.' (p. 372).

'You will persist in refusing to see my side in our little debate on criticism. Everybody has agreed with you about the faults, and the reason is obvious ; the faults are so glaring that nobody can fail to see them. But how many have seen the beauties? And it is here more than the other that the true critic shows himself. And I absolutely disagree that it is blindness or carelessness ; it is the brain succumbing to the herculean attempt to enrich the world of ideas.' (p. 373).

The 'form,' it should be plain beyond all question, is achieved, and the world of ideas enriched, at any rate in *Break of Day in the Trenches*, *Returning We Hear the Larks*, *In War*, *Dead Man's Dump* and *Daughters of War*, which are great poetry. In *Moses*, *The Amulet* and *The Unicorn* he was extending his technical experimenting in the creation of myth. To dismiss these draft-fragments, as reviewers have done, with the comment that Rosenberg hadn't got very far in the mastery of dramatic form is not intelligent. They show a richly promising ability to develop into more inclusive organizations the achievements of his verbal technique as exhibited in his best poems.

I was at first doubtful about the wisdom of printing the whole bulk of the existing material, but see now the editors' decision was inevitable, given Rosenberg's kind of distinction and his extraordinary history. As they say, it is better that readers should 'form their own impression of his developing personality' than 'accept an impression conveyed by selective editing.' We have also before us some information about Rosenberg's life, the letters and some prose pieces, and the total effect should be, not only the recognized enrichment of the English language by a dozen pages of great poetry, but also the enrichment of tradition by a new legend. And Rosenberg belongs, not with Chatterton, but rather with Keats and Hopkins.

In short, a debt of gratitude is owing for the prolonged, tedious and devoted labours that went to the editing of this volume, the classical status of which, as a rare document of invincible human strength, courage and fineness, should not have to wait long for general recognition.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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ID QUOD VISUM PLACET?

ART AND UNDERSTANDING, by Margaret H. Bulley (B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 15/-).

The attempts to formulate a theory of Art that can serve as a criterion for art works in all ages and of all kinds, from a building to a flowerbowl, are of comparatively recent date. Every philosopher ancient or modern, of course, has had his say about 'the nature of Beauty,' etc., and has wriggled desperately in trying to squeeze this elusive quality into his scheme of things. More often than not he only succeeded, like the author of *The Power of Judgment*, in squeezing it out altogether. You may search in vain through the whole of Mr. Bosanquet's bulky *History of Aesthetic* for a few practical tips when you are confronted by, say, a carving by Henry Moore, or a hitherto undiscovered canvas that might or might not have been the work of an Old Master. In such a predicament not even Theodor Lipps' immense *Grundlegung der Aesthetik* gets you much forrader. Nowadays we feel that something more is required. And Mr. Santayana, with all his charm and sensibility, can hardly expect to get away with it merely by concluding that 'beauty is a pledge of the possible conformity between the soul and nature, and consequently a ground of faith in the supremacy of the Good.' No, that will hardly do any more. What we want is a yardstick that can be immediately applicable to the things with which we come into daily contact. The visual arts during the last twenty years have shown remarkable vitality, but with such very singular results, that the public cannot really be blamed for becoming confused by the countless warring schools. Moreover, there are signs that the disastrous divorce between the artist and the craftsman is to some extent being resolved. Art and Industry are making friends. They seem to be establishing, with the blessings of Mr. Herbert Read, if not a sinful, at least a somewhat uneasy, liaison. The machine to-day can turn out stuff that often looks suspiciously like the genuine article, and industrialists have to their amazement woken up to the fact that even comeliness can have sales value.

The critic, then, who hopes to say something worth while about the nature of Art in general and modern art in particular, with

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the object of helping people to discriminate more accurately between good and bad work, is expected to stick closely to the facts. He must be able to deliver himself with equal confidence about a stream-lined teapot, the outlay of a petrol station or the inventions of M. Hélion. Not by any means a simple undertaking this, and it is one of the chief virtues of Miss Margaret Bulley's new book, that she is at all times prepared, and in fact does, put her notions to the actual test. She states very emphatically that theory, neither hers nor any one else's, can be separated from the experience of art itself. At best it only provides a common basis for understanding. Nevertheless, Miss Bulley spends a lot of time elaborating what she calls a philosophy of life, this according to her being essential to support any theory of art. The first section of *Art and Understanding* is therefore occupied with outlining the main features of this philosophy. Now, that a theory of art is useless unless it is backed by a philosophy of life, is the sort of assertion that at once raises a multitude of thorny questions. And the particular character of Miss Bulley's philosophy, although it has a respectable ancestry, is not calculated to make for clarity and consistency. In the circumstances it is not surprising that this section abounds in cloudy impenetrable passages that would barely survive the strain of a closely critical examination. Fortunately Miss Bulley is much better when she gets down to brass tacks, and it is for this reason that her book may be recommended as a useful, and in some ways unique, contribution to the art literature of our time.

As for the philosophical background, it is sufficient to indicate that Miss Bulley derives her principal beliefs from Platonic and neo-Platonic Idealism. Plato and Plotinus between them furnish her with the general structure of her thought. Reality is assumed to be in mind, not in matter, and art, which is a symbol of reality, is therefore a spiritual affair. In other words, a true work of art, in contrast to a false or counterfeit one, which is concerned only with the impermanent, material nature of things, participates in a hierarchy of Universals. It is a witness to Beauty in its profoundest aspect. 'The awareness of this Beauty is the awareness of the real world, of the underlying spiritual reality of things, hidden behind the clouds of appearance or material sense.' Plotinus had much the same sort of thing in mind when he said

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that the artist fixes his eye on Archetypal Logoi. In the sixth book of the first Ennead, the celebrated treatise on Beauty, the condition of æsthetic reception is described as an impassive reading of Ideal-forms. Nor can the production of Beauty, like all other creative activity, be directly willed. The whole of Miss Bulley's system, if it can be called such, hinges on conceptions of this kind. One would certainly be entitled to inquire, if philosophy there must be, what epistemology is behind these assumptions. But one would be ill rewarded for one's pains. Altogether it may be taken for granted that, at a time when the purveyors of neo-Hegelian dialectic do most of the talking, a *weltanschauung* of this order fails to make a strong popular appeal.

It should, however, be urged in her favour, that, whereas Plotinus rarely gets to grips with actualities at all, Miss Bulley is extremely sound when judging and commenting on particular works. For example, with reference to illustrations of the Forth Bridge and the Gothic Church of La Chapelle sur Crécy, she writes 'The relationship of the parts within the main structure of the bridge has no value for contemplation for it is organized for practical purposes only. The church was also designed to fulfil a practical purpose . . . But when we study the two designs at length we are increasingly aware of two different states of mind . . . The bridge is obviously the outcome of a fully developed and specialized mechanical sense. In the Middle Ages no such sense existed. The science of engineering was not separated from the sense of art, and the two sides of the mind worked in harmony when churches were under construction.' What it boils down to is that the artist, the man of flesh and blood, lives in the world here and now, and so he is inevitably limited and influenced by the situation in which he finds himself. And that situation may not be at all congenial to the exertion of his major efforts. For good or ill he must share the way of life of the society of which he is a part. He cannot hope to produce anything out of the void by separating himself from his fellows. And it may well be that these conditions, imposed on him from without, make it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for the artist to keep his eye fixed on archetypal logoi, or anything else for that matter, save bayonets and income-tax returns. Miss Bulley shows herself to be aware of the difficulty. In the chapter on Modern Art she speaks of

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'the grossness of our mentally impoverished society.' And it is only necessary to mention that 'To-day a bored and fearful people, who have lost faith in all but chance, spend in Great Britain in a season thirty million pounds in football bets,' in order to suggest very vividly the sort of problem with which a modern artist has to cope.

Nevertheless, whatever are the prospects for the future, and Miss Bulley for one seems to be fairly optimistic (although she warns us against expecting a 'speedy revival'), we are still enjoying our Indian summer of art. And for aught I know better days are only just round the corner. Meantime it is worth taking trouble to increase people's appreciation of such true art as is still being produced. Miss Bulley's book contains a wide selection of illustrations, which for once in a way form an integral part of the text. They include examples of children's paintings and folk art, furniture and ceramics, all of which are ingeniously arranged with an eye to enabling the reader to test his own judgment. Contemporary painting and sculpture might have been a little more fully represented, but otherwise they provide an admirable survey of the visual arts as a whole. The book should be found especially useful in art schools.

RICHARD MARCH.

MORE KAFKA

THE TRIAL, by Franz Kafka (Gollancz, 7/6).

THE METAMORPHOSIS, by Franz Kafka (The Parton Press, 3/6).

There seems no point at this date in giving Kafka the ordinary short notice. We hope to publish something more adequate on him later. Meanwhile those who have read *The Castle* need only to know that these two books have appeared. *The Trial* is comparable in scale with *The Castle* ; *The Metamorphosis* is a shortish *conte*.

CHEAP EDITIONS

The Oxford University Press have brought out cheaper editions of *The Wheel of Fire* (6/-). and the *Poems* of Hopkins (5/-).

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